

While tofu is readily available throughout the city, few people really know how to make the mostof it.
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There are now 29 sites in China recorded on UNESCO's World Heritage List.
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"At least our action brought people's attention to protecting the trees and our environment."
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A 22 Million Yuan Bargain!

By Iris Miao

Last Thursday's purchase of a 1,700-year-old calligraphy scroll for 22 million yuan by the Palace Museum has raised an eyebrow or two in China's art circles.

"Twenty-two million yuan for an ancient calligraphy piece like this is not too expensive, it's too cheap!" deputy director of the Ancient Painting and Calligraphy Department of the Palace Museum Jin Yunchang, told *Beijing Today* Wednesday.

Chu Shi Song (Ode to Troops Departing to Resist Enemies) was listed as lot 1657 in Guardian Auctions' Spring catalogue. It was scheduled to go under the hammer last Sunday, however, the Palace Museum exerted its priority purchase right under the Cultural Relics Protection Law and bought the scroll in advance, using a special state treasury fund established for reacquiring national treasures.

The same day, *Southern Weekend* published an article claiming that the scroll, said to be the work of Western Jin Dynasty calligrapher Suo Jing (239-303), was not worth 22 million yuan. The article quoted several experts, who maintained that the scroll had been over valued and was of dubious authenticity.

Jin pointed to historical records that show the scroll was collected by the imperial court during the reign of Emperor Gaozong of the Southern Song Dynasty, around 1131, and passed down through subsequent dynasties. The scroll is marked with two inscriptions by Emperor Qianlong, and in the mid-Qing Dynasty, was listed as a first grade treasure in the official inventory *Shi Qi Bao Ji*.

"On this evidence alone it is already worth 22 million," said Jin, "It is no doubt one of the most important calligraphy works in art history, even if it can't be dated back to the Western Jin Dynasty, how many Sui Dynasty scrolls do we have now?"

In fact, the authenticity of ancient Chinese paintings and calligraphy works put up for auction are frequently questioned. *Bird Sketch* by Emperor Huizong of the Song Dynasty fetched 25.3 million yuan last April and *Ode to Yanshan* by Mi Fu, purchased for 29.9 million yuan last Ocober by the State Bureau of Culture Relics, attracted similar controversies.

In response to the questions about the authenticity of *Chu Shi Song*, vice general manager of China Guardian Kou Qin said that besides the company's expertise, almost every top specialists in the field had examined the scroll, including the six-member State Antique Appreciation Committee. According to those experts, the value of the work is beyond question, and the Palace Museum's decision to purchase the scroll supports their judgment.



Yang Bin Convicted of Fraud

Chinese-Dutch business tycoon Yang Bin was sentenced to 18 years in prison and fined 2.3 million yuan (US \$277,100) Monday after being convicted of fraud.

The ruling was handed down by the Intermediate People's Court of Shenyang, capital of northeast China's Liaoning Province.

The charges listed in the court verdict relating to Yang's property and horticulture business include the forging of documents, issuing fraudulent contracts, bribery and the illegal use of land.

Yang's Shenyang Eurasia Industrial was fined 5.6 million yuan (\$674,700) for the illegal use of arable land, contract fraud and bribery, while Shenyang Eurasia Agricultural Development was fined 400,000 yuan (\$48,200) for forging financial documents.

(Xinhua)

Island Paradises for Lease

By Hou Mingxin

Qianlyan Island is a tiny island 48 kilometers off the coast of Qingdao. Some 100 different species of birds are its only inhabitants, enjoying exclusive tenancy over the island's 60 or so varieties of plants, abundant sunshine and inexhaustible supply of fresh air.

China has more than 10,000 islands like Qianlyan, most of which remain virtually untouched by humankind, a paradise in waiting for would-be Robinson Crusoes.

With the passing of a new regulation, those who long to live on their own desert island paradise, now have the chance to see their dream come true.

According to the regulation, which took effect from July 1, qualified organizations and individuals can obtain a permit to lease an uninhabited island, and even give it a name.

State strengthens island administration

The Regulation on Management of Protection and Use of Uninhabited Islands, was issued on June 17 by the State Oceanic Administration (SOA), the Ministry of Civil Affairs and

the Headquarters of the General Staff of the People's Liberation Army.

It lays out strict measures concerning the protection of uninhabited islands in China's territorial waters and prohibits activities that might cause them damage.

"China has more than 6,000 islands with an area larger than 500 square meters, and more than 10,000 islands with an area smaller than 500 square meters. Over 94 percent of them are uninhabited," said Wang

Zhong director of the Office of Islands and Coastal Zone Management under the SOA, in an interview with *Beijing Today* last Wednesday.

"According to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, an island's territorial sea can amount to 1,550 square kilometers around it, while an island that can support human life can hold an exclusive economic zone with an area of 430,000 square kilometers," Wang said, adding, "the value of islands is very important for a nation."

According to Wang, administration of China's islands was for a long time not sufficiently strong. As

a consequence, disorderly exploitation of some uninhabited islands caused severe damage to natural resources and the environment.

Such exploitation was also detrimental to the national interest and posed a threat to national defense and military security, he said.

"The issuing and enacting of the regulation is a very good reinforcement of China's existing oceanic laws and will be conducive to maintaining order, protecting the ocean environment and safeguarding China's national interests," said Wang.

Use of uninhabited islands encouraged

The new regulation allows for the first time organizations and individuals to lease and develop uninhabited islands. The maximum period over which a lease can be taken out is 50 years.

As for naming islands, local authorities are empowered to adopt reasonable and suitable

suggestions raised by any interested individuals and organizations.

With regard to the use and development of uninhabited islands, "Interested parties should first provide a detailed and scientific plan," said Wang,

"The use and development should not damage natural resources or the environment of the island, and should not threaten the nation's security,"

communication, and the supply of fresh water and electricity remain as obstacles to the development of uninhabited islands. However according to Wang, the government is considering offering preferential policies for investors in these areas.

At present, much work is being done to develop and expand desalination technologies. The cost of desalinated water has fallen from over 100 yuan to nearly seven yuan per

ton, approaching the cost of tap water in Beijing, Wang said. "Many people already have expressed interest in renting an island since the regulation went into effect, however no one as far as I know, has submitted an official application."

"While independent foreign capital may not be invested in uninhabited islands, joint venture capital is welcomed," he added.

Scientists' warning

Zhou Jingzhong, a professor at the Qingdao-based Institute of Oceanography under the Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS) specializing in marine ecology, expressed concern about

exploit uninhabited islands, when interviewed by *Beijing Today* last Friday.

Zhou points out that many of those uninhabited islands host a large number of rare life forms, which have evolved over a long period of time in a relatively stable and unchanging environment.

Such islands typically have very fragile eco-systems, which once put out of balance as a result of human intervention, are extremely difficult to restore.

As an example, Zhou mentioned a variety of scallop introduced to China's coastal waters from South America in the 1980s. The new scallop reproduced prolifically, taking over the

habitat of the local species, almost threatening it with extinction.

"If exploitation of uninhabited islands goes too far, the ecology of the island and surrounding sea area may suffer irreparable damage," he warned.

Yin Jianping, associated professor at the Guangzhou-based South China Sea Institute of Oceanography, also expressed concern over the use and development of uninhabited islands.

"If the biological diversity and ecological environment of uninhabited islands are destroyed by human activity, the aftereffects may be catastrophic," Yin told *Beijing Today* last Wednesday.

Both Zhou and Yin suggested that research and investigation of the ecology of uninhabited islands should first be conducted, and potentially harmful development should be prohibited.

Photo by
Zhong Xiangqian

Those islands with potential for use in the areas of tourism, ports and fishery bases have been designated "moderate use," and are to be developed in accordance with specific land resources and environment.

Islands that have no immediate commercial potential have been designated as protected islands, and all forms of exploitation are forbidden, while all illegally erected structures have been slated for removal.



Boozhuayu Island, one of the 17 uninhabited islands off the coast of Xiamen. All the illegally built structures are to be removed.

GDP Grew 8.2 Percent in First Half Year

In the first half of this year, China finished a gross domestic product (GDP) of 5.0053 trillion yuan (about \$ 605 billion dollars), up 8.2 percent from the same period last year.

Spokesman for the National Bureau of Statistics Yao Jingyuan

told a press conference Thursday that although the growth was slower than that in the first quarter, it was still 0.4 percent age points faster than the growth in the same period last year and was one of the fastest growth periods in recent years.

He attributed the growth to the recovery of industrial production, market sales and other major economic indices in June as well as the strong growth of investment in fixed assets and foreign trade in the first six months.

Statistics show that the added value of primary industry was 475.4 billion yuan, up 2.7 percent; that of secondary industry was 2.88 trillion yuan, up 11.6 percent; and that of tertiary industry was 1.6499 trillion yuan, up 4.2 percent. (Xinhua)

Local SARS Losses Near 10 Billion Yuan

By Lily Li

Beijing has suffered more than 10 billion yuan in economic losses as a result of the SARS outbreak, slowing the city's economic growth by 2.1 percent from earlier predictions.

However, economic growth has continued, with the municipal gross product rising 151.6 billion yuan in June, up 9.6 percent

from the same month last year, a spokesman for the news office of the Beijing Municipal Government announced in a press conference Monday afternoon.

Yu Xiuqin, spokeswoman for the Beijing Statistics Bureau, said Beijing had been registering losses since mid-March, with the worst coming in May, but the economy started a come-

back in June, when SARS was brought under control. "Among all local industries, the automotive sector has been a major engine for economic growth," she added.

Statistics issued by the bureau for June show high confidence in economic improvement on the part of investors, entrepreneurs and consumers. As a result of

that month's results, the local economy is expected to show strong growth in the third quarter of this year, said Yu.

Beijing's revenues for the first six months of this year reached 30.2 billion yuan, an increase of 19.5 percent from the same period of last year, accounting for over 50 percent of the municipal budget for this year.

Overseas Chinese Donate to 2008 Olympics

By Hou Mingxin

On Tuesday, the Beijing Municipal Government started to accept donations from overseas Chinese towards the construction of the National Swimming Center. However, similar donations from Chinese citizens will not be taken, the *Beijing Times* reported on Wednesday.

The Beijing government announced two years ago that private domestic donations would not be accepted when the city was bidding to host the 2008 Olympics.

"Considering the good will of many overseas Chinese to contribute to the 2008 Olympics, the city decided to accept their donations," Qiao Wei, director of the Office of Overseas Chinese

under the Beijing Municipal Government, told the *Beijing Times*. "[These donations] embody the spirit of solidarity among Chinese all over the world."

A special commission has been set up to specially oversee donations that come in from overseas Chinese, he added.

To date, the commission has received notice of intended donations totaling 320 million yuan, some of which it has already received.

All of the donations will be used for the National Swimming Center and its facilities, construction of which will start at the end of the year and is scheduled to be completed at the end of 2006.

International agencies will be brought in to audit the donations.

By James Liu

This month, scientists at the China Academy of Sciences (CAS) Center for Space Science and Applied Research have been busy modulating and testing the payloads that will be carried onboard a new satellite that will be the first launched as part of China's Dual Spacecraft program. Plans call for the nearly 300-kilogram satellite to enter space in December and be placed in orbit around the earth's equator.

Another satellite to be sent into space next year will have a polar orbit.

Data from the two satellites will be combined with that of four other satellites from the Cluster II Mission, a major exploration program run by the European Space Agency (ESA). By combining the Dual Spacecraft and Cluster satellites, scientists will for the first time in history be able to probe space close to the Earth from six perspectives and also better study the effects of the Sun on the planet's environment.

The Dual Spacecraft program is a collaborative research project sponsored by the China National Space Administration (CNSA) and the ESA. The pivotal task of the program calls for China to build, launch and operate two satellites carrying European

and Chinese experiments to jointly study geospace and the magnetic field surrounding the earth. It will be the first time for European experiments to be integrated into Chinese satellites, according to Liu Zhenxing, chief scientist of the Chinese side of the program.

Four years after Liu proposed the Dual Spacecraft initiative in 1997, the CNSA and the ESA signed an agreement in Paris, pledging technological cooperation to turn it into a joint project.

Geospace refers to the flight area of various satellites, space shuttles and space stations around the earth. Spacecraft in this region are often threatened by magnetic storms or high-energy particles, so research of the region is aimed at improving craft safety.

"Key problems facing the Dual Spacecraft program such as orbit design, counteracting radiation and establishing a 60,000-kilometer orbit have been overcome by engineers at CAS," Liao Fangyu, deputy general-director of the program, told *Beijing Today* on Tuesday. Chinese scientists believe the Dual-Spacecraft Program is a crucial step forward in the nation's push towards manned space missions and a future lunar probe.

State Holds Public Hearing on Domestic Airfares

By Hou Mingxin

Fifteen representatives from a wide range of interest groups, including government authorities, the aviation industry and the general public participated in a public hearing on domestic airfares on Tuesday in Beijing, as reported in many Chinese media outlets that day. The seven-hour hearing was organized by the State Development and Reform Commission (SDRC).

It was the second nationwide price hearing in China, following last year's hearing on train ticket prices.

Consumer representatives urged a lower standard price, more discounts and careful consideration for special or middle and low-income groups such as

teachers, students and retired people. Aviation industry delegates countered by asking for more freedom to set airfares on their own.

The SDRC's new draft pricing scheme unveiled in April allows airlines to raise prices by up to 25 percent or cut them by up to 40 percent on the basis of a standard price of 0.75 yuan per person per kilometer.

A *Xinhua* report on the meeting said it was better organized and more transparent than last year's hearing on train tickets.

That report continued that the views of all representatives at the hearing would be taking into consideration before the release of the final version of China's domestic airfare reform policy.

Auditing Reports to Be Opened

By 2007, the National Audit Office (NAO) will open all auditing and investigation reports to the public except for those concerning State secrets, according to an office announcement made July 5.

The move is seen as a big step forward in making the nation's government more transparent. Previously, almost all auditing reports have been kept secret and the NAO only reported to the State Council and the National People's Congress.

However, the NAO has been calling for reform for the past few years and in some cases, abstracts of auditing reports have been published.

The latest bold move came on June 25 when Auditor-in-Chief

Li Jinhua reported to the NPC Standing Committee the auditing results of the 2002 State budget.

The NAO's website published the full text of the report for the first time in China's history. Later, the information was released by the official *Xinhua News Agency* and published by numerous media outlets.

In its five-year working plan released on July 4, the office promised to standardize contents, procedures and forms of the reports to be published in the coming five years.

It also vowed to tighten its auditing methods on the use of fiscal funds, State financial institutions and large State firms. (Xinhua)

Exit Formalities Simplified for Travel to Hong Kong and Macao

By Guo Yuandan

On Tuesday, the Exit-Entry Administration of the Beijing Municipal Public Security Bureau started issuing easier visas to Hong Kong and Macao after it shortened the application process to 10 workdays from the previous 14 workdays.

That change is part of a program aimed at attracting qualified personnel from the Chinese mainland to work or study in Hong Kong, launched by the spe-

cial administrative region's government the same day.

As part of the drive to simplify and accelerate visa application procedures, the Exit-Entry Administration only requires applicants to present approved papers and ID cards in order to get their visas.

The faster visa service is intended to satisfy the demands of people intending to work, study or visit their family members in Hong Kong.



A woman shops for jewelry in Shanghai. The prices of such commodities in the mainland market are not expected to change as a result of the CEPA pact. Photo by Photocome

By Jerry Ho

In late June, Wen Jiabao paid his first visit to Hong Kong as Chinese premier in order to encourage the residents of an area hit hard by SARS and also to sign the Closer Economic Partnership Arrangement, or CEPA, a trade agreement between the central government and the special administrative region expected to greatly boost the economies of both.

Service business to benefit

As Tung Chee-hwa, Hong Kong's Chief Executive, illustrated at a press conference at which the content of the pact was first unveiled on June 29, 16 different industries will benefit from the new agreement, including advertising, law, accounting, real estate, construction, transportation, logistics, tourism, entertainment, banking, securities and insurance.

Under the agreement, many Hong Kong companies will be allowed to set up wholly owned subsidiaries in China sooner, and with fewer restrictions, than Beijing had promised upon entering the World Trade Organization (WTO) in November 2001.

Among those expected to benefit are Hong Kong's well-developed service industries, which are stronger than those in the Chinese mainland and familiar with that massive market. The agreement also provides fewer but still appreciable benefits for companies providing financial services.

Stephen Long, chief executive of the Asian corporate and investment banking operations of Citigroup, said, "Any move to increase trade between the Hong Kong S.A.R. and China, benefits both economies and therefore benefits Citigroup, as we have established businesses in both markets."

"Made in Hong Kong" again

According to CEPA, tariffs for 273 categories of goods from Hong Kong will be eliminated as of January 1, 2004, which officials said would encompass 67 percent of Hong Kong's exports to the mainland. Two years later, all tariffs on all other goods will be eliminated. These conditions have led some people to predict a revival of Hong Kong's manufacturing industries.

V. C. Davies, director general of the Federation of Hong Kong Industries, expects CEPA to create tens of thousands of new jobs in Hong Kong and the push the Chinese mainland to finally overtake the US to become the S.A.R.'s largest export market.

Some economists have expressed concerns that the agreement may slow the migration of manufacturing from Hong Kong to the mainland, but Danny Po, a China tax partner at PricewaterhouseCoopers,

said that the agreement's provisions were advantageous enough that Hong Kong should receive close study from anyone moving a factory from Southeast Asia to China to tap the mainland's enormous market.

Mainland getting ready

While in the agreement The Chinese mainland seems to have made unilateral concessions to Hong Kong, it is widely believed that CEPA will prove mutually beneficial in the long run.

Cities or regions closest to Hong Kong are likely to get the most immediate and direct benefits, as Hong Kong businesses would take these places as pioneering

CEPA to Benefit Both Sides

points to enter the mainland market. Zhong Jianhui, deputy director of the Department of Foreign Trade and Investment of Guangdong Province, believes that CEPA gives a good chance for Guangdong to further integrate its abundant human and natural resources with Hong Kong's advanced technology and management to enter closer, wider cooperation.

As Professor Feng Xiaoyun, an expert in the regional economies of the Hong Kong and Guangdong of Ji'nan University commented, the Chinese mainland will be able to learn a great deal from Hong Kong as a preparatory exercise prior to the step-by-step opening to all other WTO countries as promised in its scheduled arrangements when it joined that organization two years ago.

Initially, CEPA has also ignited a rush of bank mergers. Hong Kong Finance Administration expects that since the minimum assets needed for a bank to enter the Chinese market were reduced to \$6 billion from \$20 billion, eight major banks like Dah Sing, Wing Hang, Wing Lung will be qualified to open branches within three years.

On the other hand, as a senior US banking advisor disclosed, some mainland banks are maneuvering to buy some of the their Hong Kong-based counterparts in order to learn their advanced managerial techniques for their own use in internal reforms aimed at preparing for wider international competition.

Three Chinese Portals Issue Convertible Bonds

By Zhao Hongyi

The three largest local Chinese Internet portals, sina.com, sohu.com and netease.com, publicized their bond issuing initiatives in the United States earlier this week.

Sina declared it will issue \$80 million, and later increased that figure to \$100 million, 20-years-long zero-interest convertible bonds, officially named "zero coupon convertible senior notes," which means bond-holders can convert them to shares in Sina. Convertibility price is fixed at \$25.79. Sohu followed, announcing an \$80 million bond issue, and raised that amount by another \$20 million. The price is set

at \$44.76. Netease, according to the company's CEO Ted Sun, has already collected \$75 million from institutional investors in the United States this week. The price is set at \$48.15.

The three Nasdaq-listed portals, whose shares were striving to avoid possible de-listing under \$2.00 a year ago, have seen rapid share price increases since then. Sina's price reached \$27.68 by the end of last week, Sohu \$39.46 and Netease 39.92.

Asked why it was issuing bonds instead of shares, sohu.com's CEO Charles Zhang replied "because it is easier and simpler, not to mention the zero interest rate and 20

years tenure. It's a nice deal."

Netease.com's Ted Sun told *Beijing Today* that a number of multinational banks reached the company months ago, raising the issuing topic first. "We finally choose Credit Suisse First Boston as our agent."

"The (share) prices have already been high, eight or nine times the total assets of the companies. But investors hope they can still make profits by converting the bonds to shares at the fixed rate when share prices climb higher," said a market analyst who requested anonymity.

Concerning the use of the money to be collected, the three portals seem more reluctant, saying they

will pursue the current successful fee-based services of SMS, online games and dial-up packages.

Market observers warn that a clear picture of market expansion is a must, if the three portals want to hold their leading positions and maintain sustainable growth. They believe that acquisition of network resources and ventures will be the next drama to be staged.

Netease's Ted Sun put it more clearly. "We'll continue pursuing the major profiting services, namely online advertising, SMS, games, alumni correspondence and email service. Even if we use the money collected for acquisition, it will be in this direction and framework."

Yangtze River Bridges for Sale

By Zhao Hongyi

Zhang Yingfang was eager to answer questions from the media after her company listed two bridges over the Yangtze River for sale last month. But since then, the proposed sales have foundered, and it seems now that no one involved wants to talk about it.

Nanjing Communications Construction, of which Zhang is a deputy general manager, is the city government's affiliate coordinating the infrastructure construction of subways and Nanjing's second and third Yangtze River bridges. Backed by the city government, the company listed the completed second Yangtze River Bridge for sale at 3.8 billion yuan and the third bridge, currently being designed, for 3.09 billion. Investors can either purchase 30-year operational rights to the bridges or acquire shares in them.

The purpose, as Jiang Hongkun, vice mayor of Nanjing says, is to attract investment for a sustainable development of the city's infrastructure construction. "The demand for infrastructure and investment is so huge, we can not always rely on the government budget, which is far from enough."

MQM, a Spanish consultancy company, signed a letter of intent for 70 percent shares worth 2.66 billion yuan for the second Yangtze River Bridge. Another four domestic private investors expressed their willingness to acquire 55 percent shares in the third bridge.



An artist's impression of the third Yangtze River bridge, due to be completed in 2007.

But the deals are fragile, considering the complex ownership of the bridges and the quality of the purchasers.

The two bridges are jointly invested by the Ministry of Communications, the central government body supervising the country's transportation industry, the provincial government of Jiangsu, and the Nanjing city government. "The deal could break up as long as any one of the parties opposes," Jiang Yunqiang, section chief of the city government's public affairs office, told *Beijing Today*.

The quality of the participants is another problem. M.Q.M. is a construction consultant company and is believed to lack sufficient funds for the acquisition. Domestic purchasers for the third bridge lack the expertise of management and operation.

Furthermore, operators and interested investors have encountered difficulties in how to maintain a profitable operation and safeguard the fundamental interests of the users of the bridges.

Though facing numerous uncertainties, participation of private and overseas investors in the country's infrastructure construction is a must, said Xia Yeliang, senior professor of the College of Economics, Peking University.

"The most sensitive point in the privatization of the two bridges is that they are the first of their kind and will establish a leading role for the other 20 plus existing bridges along the Yangtze River and many more under construction and design," said Xia. "Qualified investors are a must, as well as a sound mechanism for revenues and protecting the interests of the population."

It is reported that several new potential buyers have contacted Nanjing Communication Construction. "But I cannot disclose anything now," was all that Zhang Yingfang would reveal in a telephone interview.



Nanjing's second Yangtze River bridge opened to traffic in March, 2001.

Photos by Bqb

11 Chinese Companies Rank in Fortune Global 500

By Zhao Hongyi

Led by the State Power Corporation, 11 Chinese companies are listed in the "2002 Fortune Global 500" published on July 7, up from nine in the previous year.

Aside from State Power (60), the other 10 listed Chinese companies are China National Petroleum (81), China Petroleum and Chemical (86), China Telecom (214), Industrial and Commercial Bank of China (243), Bank of China (277), China Mobile (287), China National Chemicals Import and Export Corporation (311), China Construction Bank (389), China National Cereals, Oils and Foodstuffs Import Export Corporation (392) and Agricultural Bank of China (471).

Domestic media warns that these companies have no reason to celebrate,

because compared with their overseas counterparts, they are still lagging far behind in terms of assets, revenue, profit, efficiency and market-orientation.

The *Economic Information Daily*, published by Xinhua News Agency, challenges that the efficiency of the listed Chinese companies is still lower than their foreign rivals.

Total operational revenue of the 11 Chinese companies is \$260 billion, less than 2 percent of the whole of the Fortune Global 500.

Thirdly, the paper argues, the 11 Chinese companies are focused in the five sectors of electric power, petrochemicals, banking, telecommunications and foreign trade, all highly monopolized historically and with higher barriers for newcomers.

CitiBank to Enter Local Stock Market

By Zhao Hongyi

Following investment bank USB AG's purchase of four A-listed stocks in Shanghai last week, CitiBank has announced it will enter the local stock market within days. However the bank declined to reveal exactly when and what shares it intends to purchase.

CitiBank expressed an interest in publicly listed banks in its application for Qualified Financial Institutional Investment (QFII) status, and it has already acquired shares in Shanghai Pudong Development Bank. Other shares favored by Citi Group include listed companies of port services and vehicle manufacturing.

USB AG's purchases last week lightened the long depressed domestic stock market. Market observers believe CitiBank's entry will have less affect, as local individual investors are becoming increasingly sophisticated.

Aside from USBAG and Citi Group, Morgan Stanley, Nomura and Goldman Sachs have also obtained licenses to enter the local stock market under the QFII initiative.



Photo by Photocome

OS Tire Maker Buys into State-owned Venture

By Zhao Hongyi

GT Radial's acquisition of Hualin Tyre's 150 million shares this week marks the first of a foreign investor's entry to a state-owned enterprise in China by share purchasing.

The Singapore-based tire manufacturer purchased the shares, which represent 41 percent of Hualin Tyre's total shares, at an auction in Beijing for almost 98 million yuan.

The central government issued a new regulation six months ago concerning the acquisition by foreign investors of state-owned enterprises. A number of overseas investors have already indirectly acquired shares in state-owned enterprises by setting up joint investing ventures with local partners first, or by purchasing shares in the stock

market in Hong Kong and the B share (foreign currency denominated) stock markets in Shenzhen.

But GT Radial's acquisition marks a breakthrough, indicating that overseas investors can directly acquire shares of state-owned enterprises, according to Chen Shangyu, a market observer from the Institute of Economic Reforms, a think tank of the central government.

Hualin is based in Mudanjiang, in the northeastern province of Heilongjiang. The company deposited the shares in CITIC Industrial Bank in 1999 as surety for a credit of 95 million yuan, but was unable to repay the loan on its maturity at the end of 2001 and has since started to undertake bankruptcy proceedings.

Foreign Beer Giants Return

By Lily Li

The world's second-largest beer maker, SABMiller bought close to 30 percent of China's fourth-largest beer company, China's Harbin Brewery Group for HK \$675 million (US \$87 million) on June 30.

The purchase will boost SABMiller's market share in China to more than 15 percent, making it the largest foreign player in the world's fastest-growing beer market, Roy Bagattini, managing director of SABMiller China, told Reuters.

Almost at the same time, Tsingtao Brewery announced a tie-up with Anheuser-Busch, the world number-one brewer. AB doubled its stake in China's largest beer maker to 9.9

percent and plans to increase it to 27 percent over seven years.

One month before that, Carlsberg Group, silent in the Chinese market for almost three years, purchased Dali Brewery for 220 million yuan.

"All the evidence shows that after a defeated investment wave in the late 90's, overseas beer makers are scrambling to get into the country again where beer consumption is growing by more than six percent a year," said Hu Xiaohong, an economic analyst for *Beijing Times*.

The Chinese beer industry introduced the first foreign capital in 1984, and from then to the late 90's, San Miguel, Heineken, Co-

rona, Carlsberg successively came into the Chinese market. However, these world beer giants transferred or sold their Chinese companies in 2000 and 2001.

Obviously, these giants have not lost their confidence in this fast-growing market. According to the National Statistic Bureau, China has become the world's largest beer market with a production volume of 23.87 million tons in 2002 and analysts say it still offers huge growth potential. Per capita beer consumption is about 18 liters per year, compared with 50 litres in Japan and 100 liters in Europe.

Xiao Derun, chairman of the beer branch of China Brewage Association commented, "Compared

with AB and SAB, domestic companies are too weak in production and sales, tie-up and export are two ways for the domestic companies to develop."

According to Li Guirong, board chairman of Tsingtao Brewery, cooperating with international giants, advanced marketing, management, technology and funds can help domestic companies enhance core competitiveness and earn more money. "We'll see in the future that such strong cooperation will revolutionize China's beer market," he said, adding that he was confident that Tsingtao will be one of the ten strongest beer companies in the world during the next ten years.

Greenspan Ditches 'Green' for Natural Gas



Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan
AFP Photo

Washington, July 10 (Reuters) - Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan on Thursday said growing US demand for natural gas to fuel factories and electricity plants may outweigh environmentalists' desire to preserve wilderness areas that contain energy reserves.

A sharp rise in natural gas prices and an unusually low stockpile of the fuel has grabbed the attention of the Bush administration and lawmakers. As a result, Greenspan — whose appearances

on Capitol Hill usually feature discussion of broad economic trends — was asked to testify at the Senate Energy Committee on the impact of high gas prices.

The Senate will resume debate on a broad energy bill later this month. The Bush administration and many Republicans want to allow drilling on more federal land in the Rocky Mountains, while Democrats and environmental groups support energy conservation and renewable fuels.

Commenting on the growing need for natural gas and the resulting environmental concerns, Greenspan said: "We've got to make those trade-offs. They are very difficult."

"It is essential that one recognizes what the cost in energy policy is if you restrict the access to certain areas" that contain natural gas reserves, he said.

Natural gas prices in the wholesale spot market recently doubled

from a year ago, rising to about \$6 per million British thermal units (Btu). A cold winter drained inventories to a record low earlier this year, but the stockpile has steadily grown during the past month and is now only about 15 percent below normal.

The US Energy Information Administration earlier this week noted the rise in stocks and forecast prices of \$4.80-\$5.10 per million Btu for the rest of 2003.

Analysts' Take:

The rise in price of natural gas in the US provides the Bush administration, which has close ties with the country's oil industry, a great opportunity to advocate for oil and gas drilling in Alaska and the Rocky Mountains. Greenspan is providing assistance to the Bush regime in this regard.

Globally, energy has always been at the top of US global strategy. To diversify its oil resources, the US will further strengthen its control of the resources in areas like the Persian Gulf (where the US has a mili-

On Wednesday, congressional sources said House Speaker Dennis Hastert will appoint a panel of 18 lawmakers to recommend legislation needed to boost natural gas production.

As a backup for domestic production, Greenspan also called for a "major expansion" of facilities to import liquefied natural gas (LNG).

Algeria, Nigeria, Trinidad, Russia and Venezuela are among current and potential exporters of

LNG to the United States.

Some 14 LNG projects have been proposed for the US market in recent months, including expansion of Georgia's Elba Island terminal and new facilities off Louisiana, Texas, California, the Bahamas and Mexico.

US demand for natural gas is forecast to top 35 trillion cubic feet (Tcf) by 2025, a jump of 52 percent from this year.

(Chris Baltimore)

tary presence in Iraq), Central Asia (a military presence in Afghanistan) and Northeastern Asia (the US has a presence through its oil companies detecting oil in Siberia, Sakhalin Island, Kamchatka Peninsula, and the Sea of Okhotsk).

America's further dominance of global energy resources makes it more difficult for developing countries, including China, to obtain such resources, both in price and quantity. The dominance will also damage the benefits of the oil exporting countries.

— Yuan Guohua, senior researcher, National Land Resources and Economics Research Institute, Ministry of Land and Resources



After two decades of war, the educational system in Afghanistan has been ruined. Ninety percent of the population are illiterate. Today, the country is seeing a rapidly increasing number of book stores and bazaars. Education is also available to girls and women.

Xinhua Photo

Japan Eyes Accounts Receivable from Asia

Tokyo, July 8 - Japan's Ministry of Finance plans to work with the Asian Development Bank (ADB) to create a market to enable small and mid-size Japanese companies to sell accounts receivable from their exports to Asia, a leading Japanese financial daily reported Monday.

According to the *Nihon Keizai Shimbun*, the plan, which is expected to go into effect as early as next spring, would allow companies to quickly convert such accounts receivable into cash, thereby enabling them to invest those funds in other operations.

By establishing a financial market specifically aimed at supporting exporters, the finance ministry aims not only to encourage the revitalization of exports to Asia - a key factor for the Japanese economy - but also to strive to shift the emphasis away from dollar dominated transactions in Asian regional trade, the report said.

Currently, with most trade transactions in Asian regions outside of Japan, Japanese companies accept notes when they sell their products to Asian firms. In many cases, the counterpart companies then pay the Japanese firms in cash only after they have sold the products.

Due to the lack of structure to enable Japanese investors to monitor the business operations of Asian companies outside of Japan, accounts receivable funds held by Japanese companies to such firms are often difficult to sell and convert into cash, the report said.

Under the proposed plan, a special-purpose company (SPC) created by major banks would purchase accounts receivable from Japanese firms. The SPC would then bundle together some of the accounts receivable and then securitize them for sale in

the form of asset-backed securities (ABS) to investors.

Corporate Asian counter parties would pay the SPC in cash, entirely with yen. Companies that sell their accounts receivable to the SPC would mainly be small and mid-size firms.

In cases in which Japanese banks and investors find it hard to keep track of the business operations of certain Asian companies, the Asian Development Bank will step in to guarantee credit via financial institutions from each Asian nation or region, the report added.

Analyst's Take:

Basically, Japan's initiative is to stimulate the exports of the Japanese small and medium enterprises that have suffered the worst during the recent decade long economic stagnation.

Japan has spent more than two decades building up close trade ties and a solid status for the yen in ASEAN and East Asia in the 1980s and 1990s.

But these efforts have met challenges from China as the country enjoys a regional political influence in the area and is growing economically strong. Japan needs to consolidate the yen's status in the region. Renminbi enjoys a wider acceptance in transaction today in southeastern Asia than the Japanese yen.

Globally, Japan needs to continue exploring world markets to digest its domestic production capability. It also wants to reestablish the international status the yen enjoyed a decade ago.

— Li Guanghui, researcher of Japanese studies, Chinese Academy of International Trade and Economic Cooperation

Dell Launches Recycling Program

San Francisco, July 10 (AP) - After becoming the target of angry environmental and workers rights groups, Dell Computer launched a recycling campaign Wednesday aimed at businesses and public customers including governments, schools and health care institutions.

The nation's largest computer maker will charge customers as little as \$49 to dispose of computers safely - without dumping hazardous materials in landfills in the United States or in developing countries.

As part of an "Asset Recovery" program, Dell executives reiterated their promise to stop using prison labor to recycle computers, which contain dangerous, brain-damaging chemicals.

Until last week, Dell shipped used computers to UNICOR, a self-sustaining corporation that uses prison laborers, part of the Federal Bureau of Prisons. Washington-based UNICOR employs 1,100 convicts in recycling, paying them 20 cents to \$1.26 per hour.

Kate Krebs, executive director of the National Recycling Coalition, said she was "thrilled" with Dell's program, which includes a website where customers can sign up and pay for recycling.

"We view this as a perfect step to help customers fulfill their environmental obligations in a simple, affordable manner," Krebs said Wednesday during Dell's telephone conference.

As part of the recycling, Dell will also strip hard drives of confidential data. The company will remove asset tags and other sensitive information

in a cleansing process called "three times data override."

Customers who want added protection - such as hospitals that store patient data - may pay more for destruction of hard drives.

Executives at Round Rock, Texas-based Dell said their efforts had little to do with a report in late June by the San Jose-based Silicon Valley Toxics Coalition, which criticized Dell's program as "primitive."

Pat Nathan, Dell's senior executive of environmental affairs, said the company changed its policies after focus groups with customers and contract negotiations with recyclers.

"It's a journey," Nathan said during the phone conference. "It's not something we're going to check off and put a tick in the box."

(Rachel Konrad)



Dell's staff loading a truck with unwanted Dell computers for television cameras earlier this week in Seattle.

AP Photo

Asian Tourism Plots Comeback

Hong Kong, July 15 (AP) - As Asia's tourism industry bounces back from the SARS crisis, experts said more joint marketing and better sharing of information could help the business move forward.

SARS cost Asia's travel business US\$11 billion in the first two months of the outbreak, said Philippine Tourism Secretary Richard Gordon, who serves as chairman of the Pacific Asia Travel Association, at the Boao Forum for Asian Tourism.

After seeing big blows to tourism from terrorism and SARS, Gordon also said that better sharing of information would help nations deal with future crises and joint marketing will help the industry recover.

Greenspan Says Fed

Could Cut Rates Again

Washington, July 15 (AP) - The Federal Reserve will cut short-term interest rates lower "for as long as it takes", Fed Chairman Alan Greenspan told Congress Tuesday.

To nudge along the economic recovery, Greenspan and his Federal Open Market Committee colleagues reduced the rate on June 25 by one-quarter percentage point to 1 percent, a 45-year low.

Some economists had believed that the Fed would not move the funds rate lower than 0.75 percent, saying interest rates lower than that would make it difficult for money market mutual funds to meet expenses and still pay returns to investors.

Greenspan disagreed with that notion, saying: "I think that is mistaken." Financial firms have demonstrated considerable flexibility in the past in finding ways to make a profit even at low interest rates, he said.

(Jeannine Aversa)

Energy Giant Mirant

Goes Bankrupt

Atlanta, July 15 (AP) - Mirant Corp., the third largest energy power in the US, filed for bankruptcy Monday. Mirant failed to refinance its debt in time to avoid bankruptcy.

Though it didn't get caught up in the same level of financial shenanigans as Enron, the Atlanta-based company did make significant accounting errors and lenders are still uneasy with the energy trading part of its business.

Bankers on Wall Street are worrying about a collapse like that of Enron's.

(Harry R. Weber)

EU, Japan Cheer as WTO

Thumps US

Brussels, July 11 (AFP) - The European Union, Japan, China and five other countries welcomed a decision by the WTO that US safeguard measures on steel imports were illegal under international trade rules.

The United States slapped three-year tariffs of eight to 30 percent on selected types of steel imports in March 2002.

The EU initiated the move against the US steel tariffs and was joined by Brazil, China, Japan, New Zealand, Norway, South Korea and Switzerland. However, the United States quickly contested the decision by a panel of experts and vowed not give up its tariffs.

Entertainment And

Media Industry Growing

New York, July 11 - Global entertainment and media industry spending will surpass \$1.1 trillion this year, a 3.7 percent increase from 2002, and reach \$1.4 trillion in 2007, according to PricewaterhouseCoopers in its annual report "Entertainment and Media Outlook: 2003-2007, North America (with Global Overview)".

"Essentially, digital adoption both giveth and taketh away. New products and services generated by digital technology and broadband will drive market growth. However, in the near term, digitization will cannibalize existing revenues and piracy threatens new digital content business models," said spokesman Kevin Carton.

Capital Airport Waltzes through Anti-SARS Evaluation

By Lily Li

Beijing Capital Airport received excellent marks for its anti-SARS measures after tests of its readiness to treat SARS patients were conducted last weekend.

On Saturday morning, Argentinian Silvio Finkelstein went to a ticket counter in the arrival hall accompanied by a woman. He was coughing loudly and asked the person manning the counter in English what to do because he had a fever of 39 degrees.

The young woman told him to relax and gave him a face mask.

Five minutes later, doctors arrived on the scene and escorted Finkelstein to a quarantine room in the waiting hall, where they have him a thermometer. He confirmed that his body temperature was a dangerous 39 degrees.

The doctors at once asked him to don a protective outfit and shoe covers. Finkelstein was then led through a special, restricted passage into an outside quarantine room and the doctors called an ambulance.

This simulation was among the procedures of a three-day evaluation of the airport's abilities to respond to possible SARS threats. It was overseen by Finkelstein, an aviation expert and senior medical officer for the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), and Diane Cote, an expert in passenger ground-handling operations from Canada and also an ICAO member.

The pair visited Beijing between July 11 and 13 upon invitation by the Civil Aviation Administration of China (CAAC). They left the city on Monday to continue their inspection tour with checks of the international airports in Shanghai and Guangzhou.

At present, temperature checks are mandatory for all passengers and staff going in or out of the airport. Infrared fever screening systems operate in the departure hall, arrival hall and transfer points, and passengers are also required to submit health declaration forms.

Guangzhou.

"I am delighted to present the CAAC a very good evaluation report stating that the CAAC fully complies with the ICAO's recommended anti-SARS measures," Finkelstein said on Sunday morning.

When the museum was first built in 1962, it was one of the ten largest buildings in the city. Reconstruction of the aging facility began on May 10 last year with an investment of 19 million yuan from the central government. Total space in its main buildings has been expanded by over 5,000 square meters, and the number of exhibition rooms has increased from 14 to 21.



The Museum of Fine Arts is ready to show its new face. Photo by Luby

Museum of Fine Arts to Reopen July 23

By Lily Li

Following one year of external and internal improvements, a ceremony for the reopening of the China National Museum of Fine Arts and the facility's 40th birthday will be held July 23. The next day, the museum will again open its doors to the public, announced a museum spokesman at a press conference held at the museum last Friday.

Among the additions are advanced alarm systems for theft and fire, new reception rooms for honored guests, information stands, coat-check closets and handicapped-accessible bathrooms.

The price of tickets to the reopened museum will be hiked from the previous four yuan to 20 yuan.

Reporter Wins Big

By Chen Ying

Lottery mania is likely to reach epic proportions after local media reported that a Beijing resident won two top prizes in a lottery drawing held last Sunday, bagging a total of around 10 million yuan.

It was the first time for a local person to win the top two prizes in one lottery. According to the Beijing Welfare Lottery Issuing Center (BWLIC), the lucky now millionaire is a local reporter, but the center refused to disclose further details.

The media initially reported there were two winners and it was sheer coincidence that both lottery tickets were sold at the same distribution outlet in Haidian District. Then, to the great surprise of BWLIC office staff, the winner, surnamed Li, arrived at their office on Monday and then again on Tuesday to collect his prizes.

Li bought five tickets, the numbers for which were all picked at random by a lottery machine, and then purchased the same tickets again the next day.

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Baby Dolphin Has One-Month Birthday

By Su Wei

Saturday is a happy day for the Beijing Aquarium, as it will mark the one-month birthday of a baby dolphin born there on June 19. The dolphin is the first born in non-natural conditions in North China.

The baby has shed its fetal hair, leaving its skin smooth like that of a mature dolphin. Lin Yingtao, a veterinarian at the aquarium said the baby is in good health, though its gender is still unknown. "Nursing more than a dozen times a day, it has grown 20 centimeters to 1.3 meters long within one month," he said. Lin added that the baby will begin being fed raw fish around October, though it may continue to nurse as well until next June.

The baby and its mother have



Photo by Jackey

a guest of another mature female dolphin in their special pool. "The baby barely takes a second to rest, it just keeps swimming almost all day," said Zhang Yingqi, a dolphin coach at the aquarium. "The mother would get worn out if there were no other dolphins around to swim with the baby."

The aquarium intends to start soliciting ideas from the public for a name for the little dolphin around the end of this month.

Panda Goes back to Nature

By Lily Li

Xiangxiang, a two-year-old panda bred in captivity in the Panda Research Center in Wolong, Sichuan Province, left its home to enter the wild last Tuesday morning. He is the first panda bred by people to return to nature and marks the start of a test project for releasing more of the endangered bears into their natural environment.

"Now that Xiangxiang has entered the field outside our center, we'll gradually stop feeding it stuff and leave it alone to forage for natural bamboo on its own and develop the abilities to defend itself and build a home," said Zhang Guiguan, vice director of the Panda Research Center.

The center's large outside field for raising pandas is set in Wolong Mountain at an altitude of 2,730 meters above



Xinhua Photo

sea level and is almost identical to the rare bears' natural environment. There are more than 4,000 kinds of plants in the field, with enough bamboo for the pandas to eat.

Zhang said future work in the project would concentrate on teaching pandas to survive in nature. Towards that aim, the central government will invest a total of 120 million yuan to set up a new training base in Wolong.

Pounding the Pavement

By Chen Ying

More than 12,000 people participated in a nearly eight-kilometer long race from Tian'anmen Square to the Millennium Monument last Sunday morning. The run was one of a series of activities held in the capital to commemorate the second anniversary of Beijing's successful bid to host the 2008 Olympic Games. "I'll try to participate in this race every year till 2008," said Han Qingchang, 83, the oldest entrant in the race.

Photo by Luby



Court Helps Disabled Man Find Job

By Guo Yuandan

The Beijing First Intermediate People's Court made an unusual move in May by issuing a judicial letter to the China Railway Construction Company suggesting the enterprise give a job to a disabled man.

Xu Guoqing, 37, lost his left arm when he was just 11 years old in Beijing in October 1977 when he was electrocuted after accidentally hitting a transformer



Xu Guoqing
Photo by Wang Zhenlong

while playing with an iron rod in a residential and office compound owned by a state-owned company.

The transformer belonged to the Chinese People's Liberation Army Railway Corps, renamed the China Railway Construction Company in 1984, which ended up paying for his medical treatment.

In 1985, Xu became the first disabled student to enroll in the Beijing Technology and Business University and graduated with a bachelor's degree in economics four years later.

After graduating, however, Xu has not been able to secure a single full-time job as a result of his disability. He has only been able

to find part-time work through the help of his friends and classmates.

"His travails have eroded his self-respect and he feels great shame that he has not been able to support himself. In order to avoid me and his father, he rents a small place so he can live alone," his mother, Tian Jiayu, told *Beijing Today* last Saturday.

Xu's parents are both nearly 70 years old and in poor health. They receive limited pensions that have made it impossible for them to afford the 300,000 yuan it would take to buy their son a prosthetic limb.

Xu's health became worse in 1998, and a medical examination showed that his spine was curved as a result of his injury. He sued the China Railway Construction Company later that year and demanded compensation for his further treatment. However, the Beijing First Intermediate People's Court made it a low priority.

In May of this year, that court stepped in to mediate and finally resolve the case. In the end, the company agreed to pay Xu 120,000 yuan and buy him an artificial arm.

The compensation did help Xu, but his mother still worries about his future. Lu Lianying, the judge that mediated the case, decided to lend a hand after learning more about the family's situation. "Though this kind of judicial letter is not compulsory and has no administrative power, I hope writing it will give Xu Guoqing more opportunities. And I hope that more people will step forward to help Xu and other disabled people and give them chances to work and live," the judge said last Friday.

Foreigner Sues Chinese Magazine

By Su Wei

Hearings of a lawsuit filed by a woman with an American green card against the Chinese magazine *Portrait Photography* for using her picture and copyright will begin in the Xicheng People's Court next Friday.

Wang Guofeng, lawyer for the plaintiff, Arapee Pawelzik Taylor, told *Beijing Today* last week that in May this year, his client's mother, who is Chinese, discovered two photos of her daughter in the April issue of the magazine. Later Taylor found the two shots came from a set for which she holds the copyright.

"In the full page photo printed on the front cover, she is wearing unusual clothes and is posed as if flying. On page 23 there is another full-page spread of her in ordinary clothes, but she appears to be shouting at someone," Wang said. "She particularly dislikes that photo, because it does not make her look as attractive as she actually is." He continued that such claimed misrepresentation is the basis for her lawsuit.

In her indictment, Taylor stated that

Wal-Mart Policies Spark Customer Consternation

By Guo Yuandan

In its first day of business on July 11, over 20,000 local consumers clamored into the new Beijing Sam's Club, managed by Wal-Mart Stores, in Shijingshan District. By Monday, 70,000 people had signed up for memberships to the bulk goods retailer.

Yet not everyone was content.

Before nine o'clock on the morning of July 11, many people stood in line outside the door to the huge store, unaware that they could not enter until 11 o'clock, an unusual opening time not publicly announced by the company.

A greater source of discontent was the store's membership policy. While non-members were allowed to enter the market in its first few days of operation, they had to pay five percent more on all purchases than members, who pay 150 per year for that privilege.

Unlike normal markets, all customers that enter Sam's Club stores are given a list of 18 house rules, including stipulations that the store reserves the right to cancel memberships of people who act inappropriately or otherwise damage the store, to turn away customers and to alter its rules without prior notification of members.

the magazine published the photos without her permission. "According to Chinese Copyright Law, the magazine's use of Taylor's photos is a violation, as only use of photos for news reporting and education and a few other situations is exempt from copyright coverage," Wang added.

Taylor is demanding the magazine give her 310,000 yuan in compensation for economic and spiritual damage, issue a public apology and remove all copies of its April issue from the market in accordance with China's Civil Law, international treaties that China has joined and relevant Sino-American agreements.

The magazine's management have announced they are not yet ready to issue any comments on the case.

Jin Cheng, secretary of the court, said the case is important as it may set a precedent for whether domestic law or international treaties is used to rule in cross-border legal disputes and is sure to be complicated. "First, Chinese and Americans hold different ideas about rights and what constitutes the infringement of rights. Second, it is not clear whether domestic laws or international treaties will have priority, even though the court is quite likely to refer to Chinese law," he said.

Many customers seemed unfazed by the rules, but some were puzzled. "The market should have to inform members in advance of changes in rules, or it will go against our rights as consumers. Plus, I am confused about what it means to act in a way that might 'damage the store'. Their explanation should be clearer," said Mrs. Wang, a teacher.

Yao Zhejin, a lawyer with the Kunlong Law Firm, told *Beijing Today*, "From the moment a consumer buys a member card, the market and the consumer have made a contract. The contract holders should have equal rights and equal ability to protect their rights. In China, most consumers are not aware of their rights or how to protect them. At the same time, these rules do not contradict national laws, and if they did, they would be negated."

Some of the concern about the store's policies could be a result of unfamiliarity with the membership store retail model. However, He Guoliang, a chief inspector in the operations department of Wal-Mart China Limited Company, expressed optimism that local consumers will see the blue light. "We think our special services will be accepted by Beijingers. We offer our members the newest products at the lowest prices, along with special services not extended to non-members," he said, as quoted by a report in *Star Daily* on July 11.

Meteor or Star?

Public debate over cultural idols reveals strong opinions

By Chen Ying

So who's bigger — Lu Xun or Faye Wong? Go on, be honest. A recent nationwide poll tried to find out and has stirred up strongly varying points of view.

It's certainly an issue people are eager to debate. The poll to find "China's top ten cultural icons in the 20th century", held by sina.com and 17 other media bodies, had more than 140,000 responses within two weeks. The final list has just been published.

The main criterion was that a true idol should make people think about China when their name is mentioned. They should also be at the top of their professional field and they should represent a kind of cultural value, trend or spirit. No characters from books or movies allowed.

The sponsors nominated 50 elite suggestions for the poll. The result was revealed on June 20. Among the winners, eight were born before 1940. Controversy soon raged over the fact that the other two were Hong Kong pop stars — Leslie Cheung and Faye Wong.

Cheung became popular as a Canto-pop singer in the 80s. He won acclaim by playing a gay opera singer in Chen Kaige's 1993 classic *Farewell My Concubine*. Leaping to his death from the 24th floor of the Mandarin Oriental Hotel in Hong Kong on April 1 made Cheung a legend in his fans' hearts forever.

Wong was born in Beijing and became a pop singer in Hong Kong. She is one of China's biggest superstars.

But many people still think it is ridiculous to mention them in the same breath as other more established legends since they are just "entertainment artists". To some people, pop stars are like meteors, shining brightly but briefly.

Some newspapers have expressed that the eight older icons had a moral weight and correctness that a pop star could never claim. Also, many have questioned the relevance of the poll, saying people of different ages and cultural backgrounds have totally different understandings of culture, celebrity and icons.

Just for a bit of perspective, a similar list of cultural icons from America was polled by American media at the beginning of this year, according to *Youth Reference*. The same standard was applied: that they should make people think of America, whether people like them or hate them.

They were: John F. Kennedy, Marilyn Monroe, Elvis Presley, John Wayne, Martin Luther King, Michael Jordan, James Dean, Frank Sinatra, Ernest Hemingway and Ronald Reagan.

In this list, movie stars and pop singers stood alongside writers and politicians.

Do Chinese take this kind of poll more seriously or do the different poll results just show the difference in values between the two nations? Opinions follow:

He Zhengbang, literature and art commentator

In my mind, an idol should perform well in all aspects. He or she should be outstanding both in his or her own area and in morals. Leslie Cheung is well-known in the entertainment industry and Faye Wong's voice is famous. But do their words and deeds have a positive influence on young people?

A person shouldn't be regarded as an idol if they have a negative influence on society. After all, the reason for holding such a poll is to create a positive influence for youngsters.

Zhou Xiaozheng, professor from Renmin University of China

I certainly wouldn't participate in such a vote! I think we should have a sense of awe towards Chinese culture. Such a poll can only show that the public is harebrained. What it shows most clearly is the chaos of values in some Chinese minds.

Wang Jintang, president of Beijing No.1 Middle School

Our school once asked the grade-three high school students to write an article about the icons they held in their hearts. They chose many different people. It showed how diverse contemporary people's loves and interests are. From this point of view, I'm not surprised at the poll's result.

Any poll is a kind of game to some extent. For this poll, the concept of cultural people is vague and wide. If we just take the poll as a game, then the result may not be so important for us.

Lionel M. Jensen, Ph. D., Associate Professor, Department of East Asian Languages and Literature, University of Notre Dame, US

I have strong reservations about any effort to draw conclusions from such vague, unscientific straw polling. I do think that such a poll of cultural heroes, if conducted systematically and explicitly, might prove very interesting in offering an insight into what is valued in contemporary China. But keep in mind that any such poll conducted through the Internet would not be particularly representative of Chinese sentiment as a whole.

American, who requested anonymity

I think the phenomenon is common in all "TV cultures," where there's more media than messages, so my feeling is that the polls reflect the impact of "pop culture/youth culture" more than any historical culture traits, though modern culture is of course equally "historical". I also think the polls might be difficult to compare; the American poll seemed to be about who represents the US in international media — hence Michael Jordan, who is probably the best known American — and the Chinese poll seemed more internally oriented; not "Who's best known?" but "Who should be best known?"

Inesa Pleskacheuskaya, Beijing Bureau Chief, "Sovetskaya Belorussia" newspaper

The poll is as serious as people want it to be. In our times people usually do not need any public polls to find their own idols. For foreigners, for example, Leslie Cheung is definitely respected and seen as representative of Chinese culture. When I think of Leslie Cheung I think of *Farewell My Concubine*, one of the best Chinese movies. Many people started to appreciate the art of Beijing Opera after the movie and many people had a first glimpse of the difficult Chinese history of the 20th century because of the movie. Somebody might say it would be more natural for the director of the film, Chen Kaige, to be nominated in the poll. Yes, probably. But it is a public poll after all — you never know the results, and most of the times organizers of such polls are as surprised with the outcome as the media.

China's top ten cultural icons in the 20th century



Lu Xun (1881-1936), also known as Lu Hsün, pseudonym of Zhou Shuren, short-story writer, essayist, critic, and literary theorist who is considered one of the greatest figures in 20th-century Chinese literature.



Jin Yong (Louis Cha) (born 1923), his martial arts novels, all written between 1955 and 1972, are the lingua franca of the modern Chinese world.



Qian Zhongshu (Ch'ien Chung-shu) (1910-1998), Modern writer and expert on classical Chinese literature.



Ba Jin (born 1904), pseudonym of Li Feigan, writer whose novels and short stories achieved widespread popularity in the 1930s and 1940s.



Lao She (1899-1966), pseudonym of Shu Sheyou, original name Shu Qingchun, playwright and author of humorous, satirical novels and short stories.



Qian Xuesen (Tsien Hsue-shen) (born 1911), scientist of air dynamics, member of Chinese Academy of Sciences and Chinese Academy of Engineering, Father of China's Aerospace and Missile Defense Programs.



Leslie Cheung (1956-2003), famous Hong Kong singer and actor.



Lei Feng (1940-1962), China's most famous symbol of self-sacrifice.



Mei Lanfang (1894-1961), a Peking opera legend. He was the first artist to introduce Peking Opera to an overseas audience.



Faye Wong (born 1969), born in Beijing and became a pop singer in Hong Kong.

Readers & Leaders

The Problem of the Great Wall

By William Lindesay

Originally a tortuous system of border defenses, including loops and spurs and measuring approximately 6,700 km upon its abandonment in 1644, the ruins of the Ming Dynasty Great Wall remaining today constitute the world's largest cultural relic. It follows that protecting this is the largest single cultural relics protection challenge in the world.

In the last 359 years since the Ming Great Wall became operationally obsolete in the wake of the Manchu takeover, various forces, both natural and man-induced, have conspired to change, damage and destroy it.

How the Wall has changed! At first it was nature, a mixture of slow degrading processes and occasional shows of strength, changing the Wall physically. After 350 years we were left with remains, ruins of the structure, wilderness Wall, the soul of the Wall.

But even this was not seen as sacred. Suffering from hosts of degenerative problems in old age, wild Wall is now coming under modern attack by man.

We can do precious little about the passage of time, the damage inflicted by centuries past, nature, war or revolutionary madness. But what about the things we have seen going on in recent years, that are still going on, more frequently? And before we can do anything we should clearly identify the cause of the current problems.

In February 2002, when George Bush visited the Great Wall at Badaling (exactly 30 years to the day after Richard Nixon had done so) he said: "The Wall's the same, the country's changed a lot."

Bush Junior was stationed in Beijing as US ambassador in the 1980s, and he was making his comparisons, and praising China's reform progress, on the basis of his experience in China during that decade. But had he wanted to make a comment about the state of Great Wall, I would have told him to say: "The Wall's not the same, because the country has changed a lot."

It is a straightforward case of cause and effect.

Like Bush, I was in China in the 1980s, but unlike him, I have spent

nearly 1,000 days on and around the Wall during my 15 years here. During this time I have seen the effect and identified the cause.

Yes, while China's economy has been recording massive growth over the last decade in particular, putting more cash in peoples' pockets, giving them the financial wherewithal to go places, as well as giving them leisure time, the Great Wall has been coming under a renewed, modern attack.

Efforts to protect the Wall have not matched these massive social changes that have produced enormous lifestyle changes. Suddenly, for example, vast sections of wilderness Wall, that a few years ago were out of reach to most, are now just two or three hours' drive away. Cars have got cheaper, expressways and ring roads have been built, suburban roads have been improved, and local townships, eager to get a piece of Great Wall tourism for themselves, have even put up road signs to point the way to drivers.

Moreover, the new attention that the Great Wall is receiving has prompted local farmers, township officials and county entrepreneurs to jump on the bandwagon and try their hands at tourism provision. Lagging far behind their urban counterparts who drive up in their gleaming motor cars, farmers have naturally been only too eager to abandon food production and venture into shadow-of-the-Wall tourism. Exploiting the absence of laws to specifically protect the unique Wall - an outdoor museum - let alone its surroundings, crass commercialism has sprung up beside or even upon the Wall.

These changes and forces have subjected many sections of wilderness Great Wall, a totally unprotected building and its surroundings, to various, numerous and increasingly-frequent destructive forces.

This is the problem of the Great Wall. Having identified the cause and outlined the effect, then what about the cure?

William Lindesay, director of International Friends of the Great Wall, will be contributing to Beijing Today every month.

Withdraw, to Welcome

By Cindy L. Jiang

A great call of "Time-out!" has been sounded by the government on one of the marketing mainstays for thousands of newspapers and periodicals in China. By the end of September, all newspapers and periodicals, except scientific and technical ones, will have to suspend all their promotional delivery activities, according to the Propaganda Department of the Central Committee of the CPC, State Press and Publications Administration and the General State Administration of Postage.

This is an unusual step. Previously, publications could sustain themselves through almost guaranteed "subscription".

Among the 2000 kinds of newspapers and 8000 kinds of periodicals published each year, 80 percent are owned and run by different levels of party units and administrative organizations. Most of them have relatively steady subscription. But it will be different if they are not allowed the privilege of demanding subscription, thanks to their influential and decisive power.

The following is not a special case. When somebody is to set up a business, after he has registered with the industry and commerce administration, he gets a notice requiring him to subscribe to a periodical edited by this or that unit. It happens again when he applies for the voucher and tickets from the tax offices, and he will be asked to subscribe to periodicals on tax. If his company uses a car, he must subscribe to a transportation or driver's newspaper.

It doesn't necessarily come in the form of an order, more of a suggestion. After all, you've just started up a business and everything is new to you so you'll need useful information from such publications. But who's going to say NO when they are under the noses of the authorities who conduct frequent check-ups and hand out vital certifications. Before the new enterprise starts to run,

it already has high costs from spending on such publications.

It is worse in small towns and poor areas. In some remote villages where state aid is needed, several state-level newspapers or periodicals can be found displayed in offices. Most of the time, one kind is enough but there are several publications looking for bigger circulation. These publications often are not read by anyone and are just thrown out.

Prohibiting this practice has been part of the central government's effort to reduce peasants' heavy burden. In general, a single village government spends 1000 yuan on such publications in one year, the equivalent of one peasant's income for three years, according to Professor Du Gangjian of the National School of Administration. He says almost half of all the newspapers and periodicals are in business difficulty and they have to live off these "subscriptions" as well as state grants.

Obviously, the new determination to enact this policy is a brainchild of the new leadership of 2003.

2003 is also the time when China fulfills its commitment to the WTO regarding foreign investment in the books and periodicals retail trade. This will be permitted from May 1. It means that using administrative power to sell publications will be violating WTO rules. More than 60 foreign companies have set up representative offices in China, ready to apply for registration for this market, according to a China Daily report in April.

A pause is not a stop. A pause is for a better look and further thinking. It should be a kind of withdrawal in this case, making a detour to an adjusted or changed future goal. WTO commitments are waiting ahead. Positive expectations are also waiting ahead.

Cindy L. Jiang, deputy director of Beijing Today

We welcome your letters and articles, preferably around 700 words. Please give your full name, current address and phone number (not necessarily for publication). You can email us at comment@ynet.com or fax us at (010) 6590 2525.

The views expressed in this column are those of the authors only and do not necessarily reflect the editorial stance of Beijing Today.

SOUND BITES

"It happened so fast that we could not do anything to save my daughter. She died within hours. The \$1,040 compensation from the government will not bring back my daughter."

— Soma Naik, a mother who lost her daughter G. Bharti to encephalitis. A rare summertime outbreak of mosquito-borne encephalitis has killed 110 children in the southern Indian state of Andhra Pradesh over the past six weeks. Most of the victims were poor, malnourished children from rural areas

who may have succumbed because of a sudden change in weather from intense summer heat to monsoon rains.

"If any one of the Saddam Husseins here says he doesn't come for money, then he must be telling bullshit."

— One of the "Saddam Husseins" who "surrendered" to allied troops in Iraq. Several hours after the United States announced a \$25 million bounty for the capture of Saddam Hussein

or information of his death or whereabouts, more than 3,000 Iraqi people claimed to be Saddam Hussein himself and gave themselves in.

"The issue is not one of recovering the sculpture's original look because there is not one millimeter of its original surface left."

— Agnese Parronchi, a restorer, on a dispute on the cleaning of Michelangelo's David.

By Chen Si / Jerry / Iris

Migrant Children and the City

"There is not enough light inside. Mother does not allow us to turn on the lamp. We need to save money."

— Xiao Wei, 13, from Henan.

By Su Wei

Lili, 9, has long wondered what the difference was between her and her classmates. Like them, she was born and grew up in Beijing, she wears the same uniform and learns the same subjects with the same teachers. "But we are different," she told *Beijing Today*. "They are Beijing children. I am a migrant child."

Her parents, from Heilongjiang, are called migrant workers even though they have been running a garment store in Haidian District for over ten years.

In Beijing there are around 420,000 children of migrant parents aged below 18. That's about 14 percent of the total 3.23 million migrant people living in the capital. Last Monday, Beijing Women and Children's Working Committee released the results of a survey they conducted among 494 migrant children, trying to give a full picture of their lives and studies in Beijing.

Who are they?

Most of the children, including 50 percent of those who have lived in Beijing for over five years, do not have Beijing permanent residence.

These children mainly came from Hebei (20 percent), Henan (18 percent), Anhui (17 percent) and Sichuan (6 percent).

Xiao Wei, 13, whose family came to Beijing from Henan eight years ago, lives in a "house" near the Big Bell Temple in Haidian. The house consists of one room, less than eight square meters in size. There are two single beds placed one above another as a rather precarious bunk. The upper one is for Xiao Wei and his 10-year-old brother; the lower one is for his mother and his four-year-old sister.



Coming to Beijing: children come to the capital hoping for a better life.

Photo / Tony Stone

"My father found a stick to support the bed. We have to be very careful because if the bed falls, it could injure my mother."

He says his father sleeps on a desk near a small window of the room. The room only has one window. On the desk are a pile of bowls, several glasses, a bag of rice and some potatoes and green peppers.

There is a strong, strange smell in the room though the window and the wooden door are open for most of the day.

Xiao Wei says he always does his homework outside. "There is not enough light inside. Mother does not allow us to turn on the lamp. We need to save money," he says.

When he finishes his homework, he usually helps his parents, seafood dealers in a wholesale market in Fengtai District. After dinner, he either plays with other migrant children living nearby or squats watching programs on a small TV, together with more than a dozen neighbors.

Xiao Wei is reasonably lucky. Although 77 percent of the migrant children surveyed live in houses like his, around 10 percent live in basements and just over

four percent live in places which can only be described as shelters.

The cheap houses that migrant families live in are usually dilapidated, dark and wet. They often have asbestos roof tiles, making them cold in winter and hot in summer. A bed, a table for meals and an oven is usually the only furniture inside.

Cheap is best, when it comes to food and drink. Owners of three stores in a street near the Big Bell Temple say the most popular items are fried noodles that cost just under one yuan and soft drinks in plastic bags.

Education: a worthwhile burden

Over 72 percent of the children surveyed study in state schools. Around 22 percent study in schools specially for migrant children. These ones are cheaper, but parents don't think they're as good.

Schools for migrant children usually charge each student between 300 and 400 yuan per school term. In state schools there are a variety of fees and migrant families often have to pay extra for their children to be accepted.

It's a substantial expense for most families. Over 43 percent of the surveyed children were

from families whose living standards fall well below the ideal minimum set by the Beijing municipal government. These families' monthly income is less than 800 yuan. For 13 percent, it's less than 400 yuan.

"If the school does not charge any extra fees not allowed by the government, it is not too hard for us to afford our son's education," says Li Yufen, a migrant mother with a 10-year-old son in a state school in Changping District. "Every year, we have to hand in an extra fee of several thousand yuan for the school to accept our son. There are also some fees for buying school uniforms, insurance coverage, and school and class activities." Her husband, Wang Ming, the head of an indoor decoration team, can earn an annual profit of up to 70,000 yuan.

Hu Fengping, a clothing dealer, says her 12-year-old son, Liu Xiaoyu, once studied in a primary school for migrant children. "It is really too expensive to study in a state school," she says. "But the teaching there is better than the one for migrant children." She says she merely complains to the school about any excessive

fees instead of reporting it to a government department. "I know no matter how much the school charges I would still send my son there. To get better education I am even willing to borrow money at high interest."

Zhan Yanping, 13, the child of a migrant family from Fujian, is in charge of getting his brother, 10, and sister, 8, to a primary school on the border of Beijing. Every morning he has to wake up at 6:00. His parents, vegetable sellers, leave for work no later than 5am. "If I get up one minute late, we can hardly get to the school bus and have to walk the 15 kilometers to school," he says.

Of all the surveyed children studying in Beijing, around 90 percent say they like schools where they study, especially those studying in state schools.

Chen Liang, 8, a migrant child studying in a state school in Shenjingshan District, says he really cherishes the opportunity to study in Beijing. "Teachers are more professional. They are always good tempered even when I do something wrong," he says. "When I am late for class in the morning, teachers there bring some cake for me. I even want to be late everyday so I can have

those delicious cakes."

Liu Xiaoyu also enjoys the state primary school where he studies. "We learn poems in the morning self-study class and draw pictures in computer classes. The playground is so big that we can play football," he says.

Future plans: make money

Hua Hua's parents rent a stall and sell "laobing", a kind of pancake, in a market in Zaojunmiao, Haidian District. She says whenever she goes to see them, they are always busy making and selling laobing. "Even in winter, there is still sweat on their foreheads. Sometimes I want to beg them to have a rest. I am afraid that if they are too tired I may lose them forever. But I usually control myself and say nothing at all," she says.

Hua Hua says her biggest wish is to make a lot of money so her parents can live more comfortably.

The survey indicates that most of the children share this wish, though they have different hopes for their future careers.

Xiao Wei says he wants to be a school headmaster, establishing schools for children like him. He Xiaomin, a primary school student in a school for migrant children in Chaoyang District, says she wants to be a policewoman in the future. "Police have power and prestige," she explains.

Not an easy issue

Lü Shaoqing, a researcher for the Ministry of Agriculture engaged in studying rural areas, says migrant children usually have their own unique point of view. "They have the experience of city life which most other rural peasant children never have. But the city life they have is rather particular," he said.

Lü considers that children of migrant people face a future full of uncertainty. "Obstacles to movement between cities and rural areas such as the permanent residence issue result in an incomplete existence and life for them," he said.

Han Jialing, of the Sociology Institute of Beijing's Academy of Social Sciences, says that migrant children are often sensitive about the difference between them and other children in the city, and have a strong sense of being discriminated against. "If we don't pay enough attention to helping them integrate into society, they might develop stronger feelings of resentment towards society and this could lead to conflicts," she said.

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Flood Disaster in Huaihe

By Lily Li

Since June 21, the Huaihe River valley has been deluged with heavy rains causing floods which have left hundreds of thousands of homes under water. Anhui, Henan and Jiangsu Provinces are still facing danger from floods.

The floods have caused losses of more than 18 billion yuan so far. Nearly two million people have been forced to leave their homes. The floods are the worst since 1991. Even though Huaihe people have become used to floods over the years, they have been shocked by the ferocity of the elements this year.

River in danger

The key to controlling floods has always been the careful use of flood diversion areas. On July 3, Wangjiaba in Anhui Province opened the sluice gates to open up the first flood diversion areas. Unfortunately, the water level kept rising. By Monday this week, nine flood diversion areas had been used, with more than 500,000 people working to shore up the embankments.

Wujiadu hydrological station in Bangbu City in Anhui Province announced the water level reached 21.74 meters at 12 pm on July 4. "The rain is endless," said Wei Xiujiang, a member of Anhui River Flood Control and Drought Relief Headquarters. "It's horrible to see so much water bashing against the embankments."

However, the floods were to get even worse.

Last Thursday the water level in the lower reaches of Huaihe River reached a 54-year high of 15.76 meters. The water level of Hongze Lake exceeded the flood-warning line. On Friday morning, the water level around the Huaihe River hydrological station rose to a record high of 28.86 meters, exceeding the flood warning line by 1.51 to 3.14 meters.

The situation has improved since last weekend, since when the water level in the mainstream has subsided, partly thanks to effective flood-control measures and the fact that heavy rains have tailed off. Hongze Lake, located on the lower reaches of the Huaihe River, recorded a balanced inflow and outflow on Saturday afternoon after four floodwater diversion channels were opened.

Water levels on the upper Huaihe River were also dropping rapidly on Sunday, down 0.36 meters from the day before.

"It has been 12 years since the river was so violent. We had forgotten its power," said Luo Zewang, deputy general engineer with the Huaihe River Water Resources Committee under the Ministry of Water Resources. According to him, although the Huaihe River once was one of China's most turbulent rivers, it has been more prone to drought in recent years.

People along the river said they'd never seen such heavy rains in the past 20 years. Starting from June 20, continuous torrential rains have hit the valley. The daily precipitation in Chuxian County of Anhui Province was a record 300 millimeters.

Though water levels have been dropping since Monday, the Huaihe River flood control headquarters is still urging all localities along the river to maintain high vigilance to safeguard the safety of the embankments.

Saving homes at any cost

On July 13, 830,000 local residents were out patrolling the embankments. In the past two weeks 16,542 troops have been sent to help evacuate people and repair and reinforce embankments.

Though there were many people living in the flood diversion areas, there was no option but to divert water into them. There are 22 of these diversion areas along the river, Luo Zewang said,

and each time one had to be used, the people living in the area had to be evacuated knowing what they left behind would soon be submerged. The government has said it would compensate farmers in flood diversion areas for property losses.

"We are fighting with the most terrible natural power," Teng Feng, bailiff in Qinji Town said near the river. Under his feet were piles of sandbags, and beside him were the surging waves.

Teng Feng and his 1,000-strong team defended Jingshan Lake embankment. "There are 10,000 hectares of croplands beside the bank. Until we get orders to divert floodwaters in there, we'll spare no effort to defend it," Teng said.

The Huaihe River expanded to five times its usual width during the rains. "All the laborers in my village are here helping," said Hua Zaicheng, a leader from Huaying Village.

"For our homes, we can sacrifice everything, including lives," he added.

Leaving home

The floods have meant that millions of people have had to leave their homes.

Nearly 400,000 people were evacuated only in Anhui Province after huge holes were blasted in a dyke to relieve pressure on the swelling river, the provincial government said on Tuesday.

It is the biggest ever evacuation in the Huaihe River valley, said Luo Zewang.

Dongfeng Town in Bangbu City was one of the first places to be evacuated on July 5. "We began moving at 9 am," Zheng Huaiwei, a 50-year-old villager said. All valuables had to be packed up and furniture was moved up to the attics of houses.

Zheng's father, Zheng Congshun, 71, said he had experienced three evacuations before, in 1950, 1954 and 1956. "Compared with those evacuations, this one was quite orderly," he said.

Kong Lingyuan, the city chief justice, oversaw the evacuation of Dongfeng. He, with 20 court policemen, persuaded the villagers home by home to move away.

"This is an old flooding zone where villagers are aware of the need to make sacrifices," he said. Zhang Chunxue, a villager who had 25 cows, proved the most troublesome case. Kong had to dispatch a five-ton truck to carry the animals away.

Sun Jialan, 76, lived alone in a small house. "I have nothing to take but some clothes and 15 kilograms of flour," she said. "In the 1991 flood, I only remembered drawing the cattle and forgot to bring any food, so I had to borrow from others."

At 5 pm, the big speaker at the top of the town committee building began counting down. The check team began the last check at 5:40 pm. All the villagers moved away, except Zheng Huaiyuan who was still chasing after his 150-kilogram pig. "In a minute, in a minute," he shouted.

The evacuation finished at 8:15 pm and all the villagers were moved safely to other places. "No one likes to give up his home, but for the whole valley's sake, we had to move," said Kong.

"We will surely come back and build more beautiful homes," he added.

Living in new homes

Chen Haishu, a peasant from Chenying Village who was allocated to live with 13 people from three families in a classroom of 30 square meters in the Ninth Middle School of Bangbu city, said life had become pretty difficult.

When evacuated from the village, he took his 100 kilograms of watermelons with him. "But the citizens here say

the watermelons are not delicious after being immersed in the water." He had to cut the price and got only 12 yuan for half of his watermelons.

However, life in the city hasn't changed too much, except that the price of vegetables has risen and 95 percent of television programs are news about the floods.

On Monday, the central government appropriated a further 78 million yuan (\$9.4 million) to support disaster relief, quarantine work and medical treatment in the three main flood-stricken areas.

Efforts to continue

Vice Premier Hui Liangyu has been given the job of taking charge of the country's overall flood prevention work.

Premier Wen Jiabao flew to the Huaihe River on Saturday to inspect and direct flood control work along the river. "Plans for post-flood production must be made early to reinvigorate the flood-stricken areas as soon as possible," he said when he visited Yaoshan Town, Anhui Province on Saturday.

As the country has entered its annual high water season, the Yellow River, the Yangtze River, Songhua river valley, Dongting Lake in Hunan Province, are also on flood alert. "Vigilance should still be enhanced," said Zhang Zhitong, vice-director of the Office of the State Flood Control and Drought Relief Headquarters.



A family leaving their home

Photo by Photocom

Is Bayer to Blame?

By Su Wei

For Xing Shufang, a 74-year-old woman suffering from heart disease, things went from bad to worse after she was prescribed Lipobay, a drug produced by the international pharmaceutical conglomerate Bayer. On August 13, 2001, a month after she had had treatment for heart disease at Tianjin Chest Hospital, she was diagnosed with rhabdomyolysis, a degenerative muscle disorder.

The day after, her family discovered that Lipobay had been recalled on August 8 by its maker Bayer. On August 9 the State Drug Administration Bureau (SDAB) advised against continued sale of it in China. Xing had been taking the drug for the previous month. Evidence has since emerged that rhabdomyolysis is a possible side effect of the drug. Believing it was the drug that caused her condition, Xing's family lodged a lawsuit against the hospital, Bayer, and Bayer Health Care, for compensation of 500,000 yuan. Two years later, on July 8 this year, the case was finally heard at Tianjin Heping District People's Court. A decision has not yet been made.

Here, take this

On July 12, 2001, Xing was taken to Tianjin Chest Hospital because she was suffering from heart disease and acute myocardial infarction. She was advised to take 0.3mg of Lipobay once a day from July 13. Ten days later, she complained of a feeling of weakness and aches and pains. "When we reported this to the doctors, they just said it had nothing to do with

heart disease," said Li Shoumian, Xing's eldest daughter-in-law.

In early August, Xing's condition worsened. She was no longer able to walk and movement of any kind was difficult. On August 13, she was taken to Tianjin Chest Hospital again. On the following day, she was diagnosed with rhabdomyolysis. The family was informed that Xing's life was in danger. She was transferred to Tianjin No.1 Central Hospital and had blood transfusions three times in the next week. Her legs had become paralyzed.

Who is responsible?

Li says when she asked the hospital, Bayer's Tianjin Office and Beijing Office who was responsible for her mother's condition they all asked her to present evidence showing any relation between the drug and rhabdomyolysis. "When I asked them to do such a test they all told me they could not, and said another party should do it," she said.

Li then sought legal help. Yang Zhongkai, one of the family's two lawyers, says the hospital did not follow the drug's instructions.

According to the instructions for Lipobay, even for adults with a severe cholesterol condition, they should initially take between 0.1 and 0.2mg per day. The maximum recommended amount is 0.3mg per day. But smaller doses are recommended for the elderly. Xing had been given 0.3mg right from the first day.

Yang also says the hospital did not respond to Xing's suffering from pains and weakness and nor did they advise Xing to stop using

Lipobay at any time. "The medical relationship between the hospital and the patient does not end when the patient is discharged. Xing still took the drug as requested after being discharged," he said.

Li says if she had not read a local newspaper on August 14, 2001, she would not have found out about the SDAB's warning about the drug on August 9.

Lu Wenqiu, vice president of the hospital, told *Beijing Today* he did not think Xing had been poorly treated. "I think our doctors should be praised," he said. "When the patient was first sent to our hospital, she had acute myocardial infarction. We prescribed Lipobay for her to enlarge her coronary artery. She then recovered and went home."

Lu says that for an old woman in Xing's condition, it is reasonable but impractical to take 0.1mg of Lipobay once a day. "The amount we prescribed for her is the largest allowed amount. If we had not prescribed it in that quantity she would not have lived," he said.

He says Xing's medical records did not show that she had any symptoms indicating an adverse reaction to Lipobay. "She cannot simply assume that the symptoms she had are the same as an adverse reaction to the drug."

Lu says the hospital put up a notice not to use the medicine on August 9, eight days before they received the notice from the SDAB. "But we do not have the ability or the obligation to tell every patient about the notice. People should find out about it through media reports," he said.

He agrees it's possible that Lipobay may induce rhabdomyolysis but says, "it is not the hospital's responsibility to find out the relation between the drug and Xing's condition. That should be tested by the drug company."

"We do not want to have such a test conducted," said Yang, "We doubt the fairness of such tests. It is also too complicated to have such a test conducted by China's Medicine Association. I am afraid that Xing would not live to see the day when the result of the test was released." He says according to the Regulations on Evidence set by the Supreme People's Court, instituted on April 1, 2002, if a hospital fails to provide evidence it did nothing wrong in a case of a medical accident, a court must regard the hospital as culpable.

As for Bayer, Yang says the company cannot be absolved of responsibility even though it recalled Lipobay in August 2001. "Xing took

the drug before the recall and had the symptoms of rhabdomyolysis since the end of July," he said. "Bayer Health Care should be held responsible, according to Chinese Product Quality Law."

An email sent from Bayer (China) to *Beijing Today* says Bayer has acted responsibly in the development, marketing and voluntary withdrawal of Lipobay. "The safety of Lipobay was reviewed and confirmed by the health authorities in China as well as in 80 other countries," said the email. "The drug was prescribed for over six million patients worldwide and played a significant role in the treatment of potentially life-threatening risk factors."

It says Bayer respects the Chinese legal system and believes that this case shall and can be handled in a legal manner by the court.

"Bayer does not think it is appropriate to comment on the details of the pending court case. Bayer's activities in China are in compliance with the relevant requirements under Chinese law and Bayer has, and will continue, to defend itself in court," said the email.

Inevitable?

"This case is not surprising," said Song Ligang, director of Tianjin Center for Adverse Drug Reaction Monitoring. "Hospitals and drug manufacturers, especially medical staff, have long been ignoring their responsibilities to inform people about the dangers of adverse drug reactions."

Song says a test for a relationship between Lipobay and rhabdomyolysis should be conducted by hospitals. "Diagnosing adverse drug reactions is one of the responsibilities that hospitals should have," he said.

"Also Chinese people as a whole lack the awareness to use drugs safely," he said. "So it is a social issue as well as an individual case."

Lipobay (also known as Baycol), manufactured by Bayer, was initially approved in the US in 1997. It is a member of a class of cholesterol lowering drugs that are commonly referred to as "statins".

While all statins have been associated with very rare reports of rhabdomyolysis, cases of fatal rhabdomyolysis in association with the use of Lipobay have been reported significantly more frequently than for other approved statins.

This statin has been linked to over 480 cases of rhabdomyolysis, a condition that causes muscle-cell breakdown (atrophy), muscle pain, weakness, tenderness, malaise, fever, dark urine, nausea, vomiting, kidney failure and in some cases death. Over 84 deaths have been linked to ingestion of Lipobay.



Xing's health has deteriorated since taking Lipobay.

Photo provided by Tianjin Youth Daily

By Chen Ying

Beijing Today reported on a case recently about a family's efforts to save an ancient date tree in their old home in Fengtai. They gained assurances from the local forestry bureau that it would protect the tree while the area was being developed. Unfortunately, construction work is threatening the tree's survival, so the family sued the forestry department at Fengtai District People's Court for failing in its responsibility. On Monday last week, the court rejected the family's case. It was the first case of its kind ever filed in Beijing.

"We have tried our best. We're disappointed and feel hopeless," said 32-year-old Lu Sun. The family of Zhang Yongshan, 60, lived in a hutong in Fengtai for many generations. Lu Sun became a member of the family after he married Zhang

Yanwei, the second daughter of the family in 2000. The family had lived next to the tree for nine generations and their fond memories have made them determined to save it.

The family says the huge old tree used to produce over 500 kilograms of dates every year. "It was really comfortable to live under the tree," Lu said, as it made the houses in its shadow in the courtyard feel cool in the summer and warm in the winter. "We had no need to buy air-conditioning."

Protection measures

The family once attempted to protect the tree by applying to have it recognized as an ancient tree when the government instigated the new certification system for old Beijing trees during the mid-1980s. "But the local officers weren't too enthusiastic. They said it wasn't an ancient tree," Lu said. So the family gave up the idea. There

used to be five other similar date trees near the family's yard. "But the local government cut them down because of urban planning in the 1980s."

Later they decided to try again. Their task became urgent when they found out at the end of 2001 that the local government intended to reconstruct the residential area where they lived. Everyone was going to have to move out so their homes could be knocked down and new apartments built. "The tree would be cut down if it didn't get the title of an ancient tree," Lu said. He had the tree tested for age, confirming it was more than 186 years old.

According to the regulations, date trees can be regarded as grade-two ancient trees if their diameter is between 50 and 100 centimeters and their age is between 100 and 300 years old. "The tree in our yard matches such requirements perfectly," said Lu.

"But the local forestry department didn't seem to want to spend much time on the case," Lu said. An officer once told his mother-in-law, "Don't listen to your children and don't apply to have all these trees recognized as ancient trees." Lu says the ancient tree regulation could cause inconvenience for the apartment reconstruction plan.



Construction

On his way home on Friday, December 13 last year, Lu found several large and deep back holes around the tree. They had been dug around the tree and its main roots had been broken and exposed to the air.

"I phoned the Fengtai Bureau of Forestry immediately," Lu said. "They told me they would come next Monday. But the tree couldn't wait."

He then contacted the Fengtai Parks Bureau, which sent officials to the spot to stop the further destruction of the tree.

"After they heard staff from another department had gone to the site, some employees from the Fengtai Bureau of Forestry went there that Sunday morning," said Lu.

The Forestry Bureau staff fined the construction company 1,000 yuan, according to the Beijing Protection Management Ordinance for Ancient and Famous Trees, and asked the company to take steps to protect the tree.

This March, the construction company restarted work around the tree with the approval of the bureau. Bureau spokesman Li Chunling said, "The bureau invited an expert to look at the tree, and he assessed that it had recovered."

The family decided to sue the Fengtai Bureau of Forestry for its failure to keep its promise and look after the tree. Fengtai District People's Court began hearing the case on May 22.

"The tree obviously had far fewer leaves than in the past, but the expert said the tree had only been slightly harmed," said the daughter Zhang Yanwei.

According to the Ancient

and Famous Tree Management Methods for Urban Areas issued by the Ministry of Construction, the five-meter radius around an ancient tree should not be touched. "Though the construction company has taken some action to protect the tree, it is not enough and does not meet the requirements," said Zhang Yanwei.

Pollution

The family members found there was less soil around the tree when they visited to water it on May 30. They also found several huge cable bricks had been dug into the earth under the tree and the soil now contained mineral oil, which was harming the tree's roots.

Fengtai Bureau of Forestry transported two trucks of soil and replaced all the old earth around the tree this June.

"But there is still mineral oil contaminating the soil," Lu said. "I can't find anyone who might be responsible for this apart from that construction company that's building the apartments. But how do they dare to do it? Who is behind the company?"

At the hearing, the court decided the local forestry department had taken adequate actions to manage the tree and the family lost the case even though they thought they had more than enough evidence that the tree was being damaged.

"At least our action brought people's attention to protecting the trees and our environment," said Lu.

"Most people don't even know about the ancient tree protection laws and regulations. The case shocked the administration leaders. More than 20 officers attended the court during the hearing," said Lu.

"We don't want compensation. We need to cultivate people's consciousness of protection." Lu said the

family would take the case to a higher court.

Lu tried to seek help from the media. *Beijing Evening News* published the family's story on April 30, 2002. The effect was immediate. Officers from Beijing Municipal Bureau of Forestry and Fengtai Bureau of Forestry visited the family the next day, including Shi Qiang, director of the forestry politics department of Beijing Municipal Bureau of Forestry.

"Thank you for keeping such care of this ancient date tree. I should say it has the best growth condition compared with other date trees inside the Fourth Ring Road," Shi said to the family.

The family was the last to move out of the area before the developers moved in. They only did so after their tree was given the serial number 11791 as a grade-two ancient tree in August last year. Zhang Yongshan also signed an agreement with the Fengtai Bureau of Forestry to take charge of the tree's care.

It seemed the tree was safe. And there were another 11 trees surrounding it, including a black date tree, according to Lu. The family knew it would help the date tree to survive if the Fengtai Bureau of Forestry could protect the other trees.

Unfortunately, the local bureau thought it was unnecessary to protect the other trees so they were cut down, even though the black date tree was also old and big enough to qualify as an ancient tree.

Lu Sun

World Heritage Sites in China

By Zhang Bo

With last weeks listing of Nanjing's Xiaoling Mausoleum, Beijing's 13 Ming Tombs and the Jinsha, Lancang and Nu rivers area in Yunnan, China now boasts 29 sites on UNESCO's World Heritage List.

According to Xinhua Net, efforts are underway to have a further 100-odd sites entered on the list, including four of China's 35 Zhongshan Parks.

"The success of an application not only raises the profile of the site internationally, it also stimulates the local economy," Luo Zhewen of the State Administration of Cultural Relics told *Beijing Today*.

Pingyao and Lijiang attracted only a modest number of tourists before being listed as World Heritage sites in 1997, however since then, an influx of visitors from all over the world has dramatically boosted the local economies of both towns.

In 1996, the average number of visitors to Pingyao annually was about 100,000, with revenue from tourism standing at 12.5 million yuan. Now, Pingyao sees some 700,000 visitors a year, spending 7.8 million yuan.

Furthermore, World Heritage sites enjoy financial assistance and technical support provided by UNESCO.

Qualifying for listing is an exhaustive process, and local governments with jurisdiction over the sites are required to assume responsibility for their preservation under the supervision of UNESCO. Every six years, UNESCO assigns specialists to inspect the sites, and those that have suffered serious damage will be removed from the list of World Heritage sites and placed on the World Endangered Heritage sites list, which could significantly impact on local tourism.

Although no sites in China have been placed on the list of World Endangered Heritage sites, UNESCO has expressed concern about the protection of some sites.

In January, the 600-year-



Entrance to the Nanjing Xiaoling Mausoleum

Photos provided by Photocom

old Yuzhen Palace (遇真宫), an important component of the ancient architectural complex on Wudang Mountain, was destroyed by a fire caused by a worn power line. Frescoes in the Mogao Grottoes at Dunhuang have begun to shed their original pigment. Flooding damaged the Temple and Cemetery of Confucius and the Kong Family Mansion in Qufu last year, and wild

sections of the Great Wall are also under threat due to the rapidly increasing numbers of hikers and adventurers.

Over-development is the primary cause of damage to these sites. According to Professor Xie Ninggao, director of the World Heritage Research Center at Peking University, some shortsighted decision makers treat local World Heritage sites as

nothing more than a tourism resource and exploit them recklessly.

According to *Southern Weekend*, a company in Sichuan is constructing a "Buddhism theme park," with the full support of the local government, which will accommodate over 3,000 Buddhist statues, including a replica of the 37-meter Bamiyan Giant Buddha,

destroyed last year in Afghanistan. The park adjoins the World Cultural Heritage listed Emei Shan and Leshan Giant Buddha area.

Experts maintain that the new theme park will lower the cultural value of the site and have called for the project to be halted, but despite such opposition, the project is still underway.

In Nanjing, to celebrate the listing of the Xiaoling Mausoleum, it was opened to the public for free from July 7 to July 9. During this period, the daily number of tourists hit a record high of 100,000, a increase of 100-fold. People clambered all over the stone animals, causing significant damage to the ancient relics.

Last year, UNESCO placed the Great Wall and 13 other sites named on the World Heritage List before 1994 under close inspection. The world body also called on local governments to enforce effective measures to restore the original setting of these sites within a certain period. Those sites that fail to meet the standards set within the specified period will be deprived of their status as World Heritage sites.

An official from UNESCO's Beijing Office suggested that China should suspend all new applications for listing and focus on perfecting the management and protection of existing World Heritage sites.

Some local governments have already started taking steps to better protect sites within their jurisdiction through enacting specific laws and regulations. In June, a regulation to protect the Great Wall was passed by the Beijing Municipal Government, which will take effect from August 1.

Meanwhile a project to restore Beijing's Ming Tombs to their original magnificent state began last year and is scheduled to be completed before 2008. "All the newly installed fountains at Deling Tomb are to be removed and the ground is to be repaved with gold-colored bricks," said Niu Youyi, vice director of administration in an interview with *China Youth Daily*.



The Jinsha, Lancang and Nu rivers area in Yunnan


World Heritage sites in China:

- 1987 The Great Wall
- 1987 Mount Taishan (Shandong)
- 1987 The Forbidden City (Beijing)
- 1987 Mogao Grottoes (Gansu)
- 1987 Mausoleum of the First Qin Emperor (Shaanxi)
- 1987 Peking Man Site at Zhoukoudian
- 1990 Mount Huangshan (Anhui)
- 1992 Jiuzhaigou Valley Scenic and Historic Interest Area (Sichuan)
- 1992 Huanglong Scenic and Historic Interest Area (Sichuan)
- 1992 Wulingyuan Scenic and Historic Interest Area (Hunan)
- 1994 Summer Palace and Outlying Temples, Chengde (Hebei)
- 1994 Confucius Temple and Cemetery and Kong Family Mansion in Qufu (Shandong)
- 1994 Ancient Building Complex in Wudang Mountains (Hubei)
- 1994, 2000, 2001 Historic Ensemble of the Potala Palace, Lhasa (Tibet)
- 1996 Lushan National Park (Jiangxi)
- 1996 Mount Emei Scenic Area and Leshan Bu(Sichuan)
- 1997 Old Town of Lijiang (Yunnan)
- 1997 Ancient City of Pingyao (Hebei)
- 1997, 2000 Classical Gardens of Suzhou (Jiangsu)
- 1998 The Summer Palace (Beijing)
- 1998 Temple of Heaven (Beijing)
- 1999 Mount Wuyi (Fujian)
- 1999 Dazu Rock Carvings (Chongqing)
- 2000 Mount Qincheng and the Dujiangyan Irrigation System (Sichuan)
- 2000 Ancient Villages Xidi and Hongcun (Anhui)
- 2000 Longmen Grottoes (Henan)
- 2000, 2003 Imperial Tombs of the Ming and Qing Dynasties (Beijing)
- 2001 Yungang Grottoes (Shanxi)
- 2003 Jinsha, Lancang and Nu Jiang Parallel Rivers Area (Yunnan)
- 2003 Ming Tombs (Beijing)
- 2003 Xiaoling Mausoleum (Nanjing)

Although no sites in China have been placed on the list of World Endangered Heritage sites, UNESCO has expressed concern about the protection of some sites.

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By Iris Miao

Avant-garde performance art is often aimed at getting a rise out of its audience, but the organizers of the Guangzhou Triennial show last November must have had no idea how offended one young man from the art field would be. Su Jian, a teacher at the Guangzhou Academy of Fine Art, was so disturbed by two works he called "pornographic" and "obscene" that he filed a lawsuit against the Guangdong Provincial Gallery in February, seeking 20,000 in compensation for damage to his physical and spiritual health, a refund of the 30 yuan ticket and a public apology.

After Su lost his first lawsuit, he filed another with the Guangzhou Intermediate People's Court. The hearing was held two weeks ago, but the court has yet to announce its verdict.

Regardless of final outcome, these cases, the first of their kind in this country, have become the subject of widespread debate and controversy inside and outside of art circles, especially in the Guangzhou area. Su's actions have raised questions not only about the works on trial, but also performance art as a whole.

According to Wang Huangsheng, curator of the Guangdong Provincial Gallery, Su's suit targets two works and in a statement Su even criticized performance art in general in an attempt to mislead people who do not clearly understand this form of art.

Last November's show was the first Guangzhou Triennial, run with the theme of "Re-contemplate: A Decade's Experimental Art in China (1990-2000)". The two-month show drew around 80,000 visitors and was hailed by the *New York Times* as an "epoch-making exhibition".

The two works now under legal scrutiny, *12 Square Meters* by performance artist Zhang Huan, who currently lives in New York, and the video performance work called *In the Bathroom* by female artist Cui Xiuwen of Beijing, were displayed constantly on screens of the exhibition hall. In *12 Square Meters*, which is the size of the rural open-air toilet that inspired the work, Zhang Huan daubed his body with honey to attract flies to cover him head to toe. While at first Zhang was scorned and criticized for crossing the line for behavior, his work ended up appearing in many books and articles as an example of cutting-edge experimental art in China.

The changing response to his piece shows that "critics also need time to understand new forms of art", said Wang Huangsheng.

For *In the Bathroom*, completed in 1999, Cui Xiuwen took a video camera into the women's bathroom of a luxurious nightclub in Beijing. The work is six minutes and 12 seconds of private bathroom doings, such as prostitutes putting on make up, undressing and changing clothes and talking on the phone to solicit customers or seek payment. "Cui is a very serious artist and her work indicates that human beings have devolved. It is a piece with real social significance," said curator Huang Du from the Central Academy of Fine Art, who first included Cui's work in his exhibition "Post Materialism" in 2000.

"The only word I would choose to describe the

lawsuit is 'absurd'", continued Huang, "How could anybody sue an art work? If you bought a book by a popular female novelist such as Wei Hui, whose novels are filled with descriptions of sex, and you said it made you feel sick, would that give you the right to sue the writer?"

Like it or not, Su Jian's lawsuit has again put the controversial issue of performance art under the spotlight and raised a number of serious questions regarding the field. Should there be a bottom line for morality related to art? Should artistic creation or exhibitions be regulated by law?

Huang is sure that Su will also lose his second case, because a verdict in his favor would cause too much trouble. "Art is beyond regulations and the law should not restrain the creativity of the artist," he said.

Wang concurred that while the academic value of the two works can be debated, this case is not the proper way to address the question of the limits of performance art.

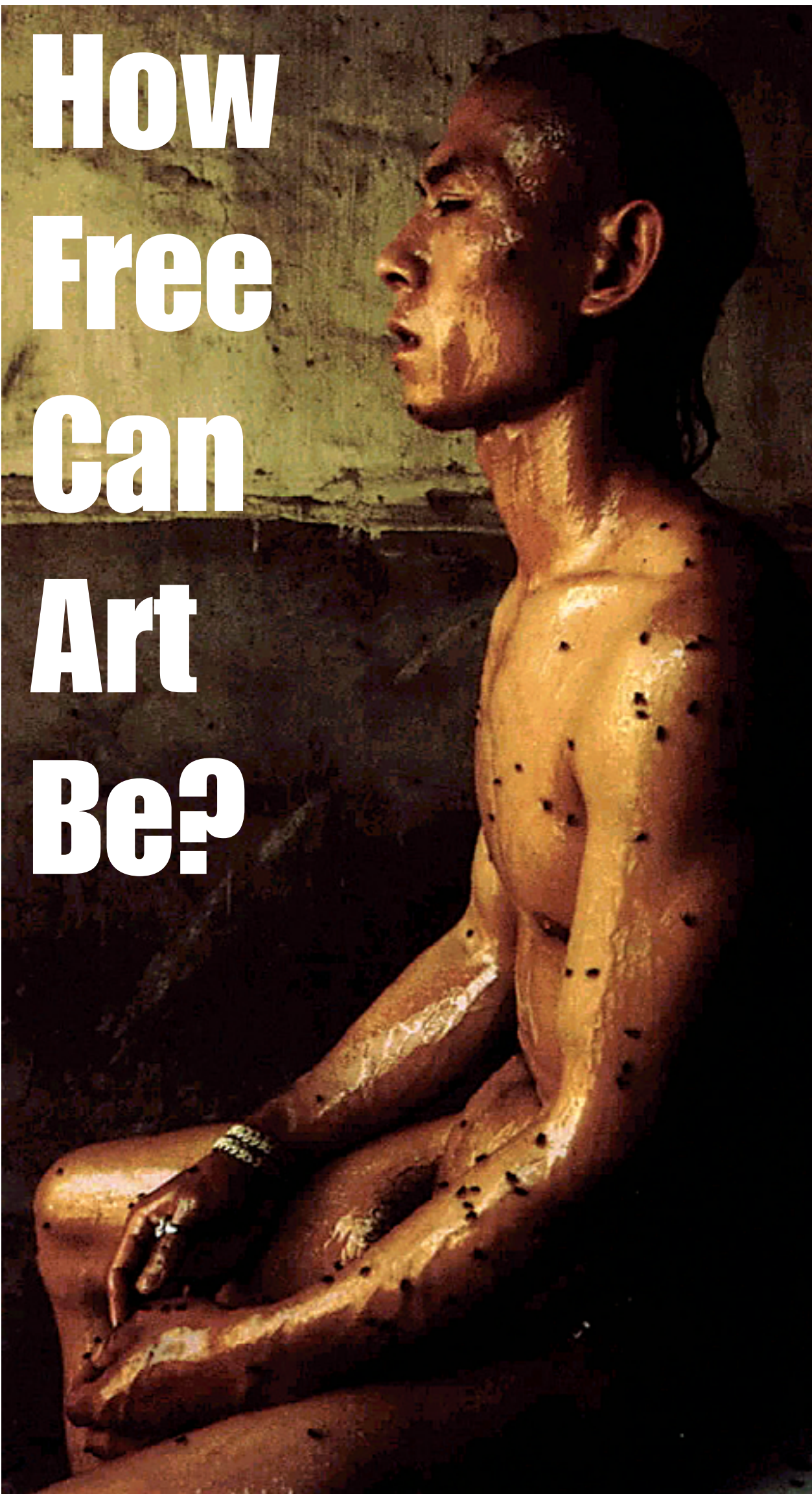
Su Jian, on the other hand, insists that art and artists can be held accountable. In an interview with Guangdong-based *Yangcheng Evening News* on July 8, he said that with so many media and legal means of expression available to artists these days, there is no reason or need for them to chose to cross legal lines or intentionally corrupt audiences. He continued that he really filed the lawsuit to realize his ideal of fostering the healthy development of art and society at large.

Unidentified sources, however, have speculated that Su is pursuing the case for his own political benefit as a way to satisfy some of conservative supervisors in his school. Wang Huangsheng was reluctant to comment on such claims and said he would prefer to ignore the non-academic elements of the case and concentrate only on the two works involved.

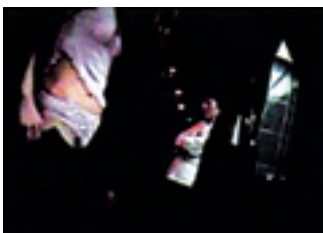
Wang admitted that during the past ten years, as experimental art developed in this country, some artists have sought little more than quick fame and success, while the works of others are overindulgent. "But time will wash out the bad, bloody, cruel stuff and the serious, good art will remain," he said.

Li Gongming, art history professor at the Guangzhou Academy of Fine Art, partly supported his colleague's case on the ground that in the past, government officials had final arbitrary say in whether a work of art was pornographic or obscene and whether it could be displayed in public. The filing of these cases at least sets an example that such decisions must have legal support. "But I don't agree with his reasons for filing the lawsuit," said Li.

The controversial case comes at a difficult time for Chinese art, with performance art generally misunderstood by the public while increasing numbers of domestic artists participate in first-class contemporary art shows around the world, such as the *Venice Biennale* and the recently opened *Alors, la Chine* show in the Pompidou Center in Paris. Li speculated that one lawsuit would not be enough to stem that tide or to otherwise interfere in artistic creation or the trend of development in performance art in China. Right now, whether the case will have lasting influence is up to the court.



A still from *12 Square Meters* by performance artist Zhang Huan



Shots from *In the Bathroom* by artist Cui Xiuwen

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Young Pianist Releases Debut CD



By Iris Miao
Introducing Chinese pianist Lang Lang at his international debut at the Ravinia Festival in 1999, Isaac Stern said "You have the privilege to hear the most gifted newcomer, you've never heard before, but you will be hearing a great deal about."
After a concert in May 2001, the New York Times described his performance as "stunning," while the Washington Post reviewer wrote, "If he were a stock, I'd borrow money to buy it." Britain's Gramophone wrote last June that Lang Lang is "Brilliant by name, brilliant by nature," and the Chicago Tribune said, "He is the biggest, most exciting young keyboard talent ... in many years."
For those who have not had a chance to hear him play live, Lang Lang's debut album on Deutsche Grammophon, released Tuesday, provides compelling evidence that Isaac Stern et al in no way exaggerated his genius.
The album features two pieces: Tchaikovsky's Piano Concerto No. 1 in B flat minor and

Mendelssohn's Piano Concerto No. 1 in G minor, performed with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra under the direction of Daniel Barenboim.
Speaking about his selection to Phillip Huscher, program annotator for the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Lang Lang said, "The Tchaikovsky Concerto is such a big Romantic piece and the Mendelssohn is such a small Romantic piece."
It is common for the Tchaikovsky Piano Concerto, a difficult piece often compared with the Rachmaninov's Third Concerto, to be played with a Russian repertoire, or with another big Romantic piece. Lang Lang said this inspired him to pair it with something lighter and more delicate. Certainly there are few works more suited to his youthful, high-spirited playing than Mendelssohn's G minor Concerto, written when the composer was not much older than the pianist is now. Lang Lang added that the piece shows another side of the musical experience, and also "shows another side of what an artist can do."

New Music at the Yan Club

By Iris Miao
The popular *An Ear to the Ground* concert series, which showcased up-and-coming bands throughout 2002, returns to the Yan Club next Thursday evening.
Sponsored by the LogistiX Integrated Communication and the Volkswagen Sound Foundation, *An Ear to the Ground* aims at encouraging and nurturing the music scene in Beijing, by offering a stage to bands and musicians who are on the brink of Making It.
The five bands appearing next Thursday are predominately female or female led.
Fall Insects are five young women playing dense, industrial rock with impenetrable lyrics. Their debut album, *Diary of a Madman*, is

out on Scream Records.
Long Kuan Jiu Duan, a duo featuring Long Kuan, late of the Mika Bombs, on guitar and vocals and Supermarket's Yu San on all things electronic, have a record deal with Crystal Records.
Singer and songwriter Jessica Meider has based herself in Beijing since 1997, returning to her home, Philadelphia, in 1998 to record her first album, *Candy*. With her band, Jessica Meider Incorporated, she is a regular at venues such as CD Cafe and Jam House.
Also appearing will be Lucky Road, and pop-rock outfit Wild Strawberries. *An Ear to the Ground* will be staged regularly, on the last Thursday of every month, starting at 9:00 pm.

No Zhang Yimou Museum Says Zhang

By Lily Li
Zhang Weiping, producer of *Hero* and long-time partner of the film's director, Zhang Yimou, told *Beijing Youth Daily* last Tuesday that Singapore's International Investment Group and China Poly Group were planning to invest 30 to 50 million yuan to build a Zhang Yimou Arts Museum at an ancient site in Tongling, Shaanxi Province. "The museum will showcase this international master's great achievements in film, op-

era and ballet," he said.
However, Zhang Yimou has scotched the plan, telling *Beijing Youth Daily*, "I can't endure such a big honor. In the history of Chinese arts, there are so many masters I look up to, like Lu Xun, Ba Jin, Lao She, none of whom have a museum dedicated solely to them."
As yet, the would-be investors have not commented on Zhang's negative reaction, or said whether they plan to push ahead with the museum in the absence of his approval.

Fans Rush to Buy Legend's Last Album

By Chen Ying
Sales of Leslie Cheung's posthumous final album, titled *Yi Qie Sui Feng (Let Bygones Be Bygones)*, reached 50,000 in Hong Kong in just one week, according to record company Universal Music.
Cheung, who was 46, leapt to his death from the 24th floor of the Mandarin Oriental Hotel in Hong Kong's central district on April 1.
Universal released the album containing seven previously unreleased tracks, six written by Cheung himself, on July 8, commemorating the 100-day anniversary of the star's death.
Cheung first became famous as a Canto-pop singer in the 1980s. An acting career followed, he played a gay opera singer in Chen Kaige's 1993 classic *Farewell My Concubine*. His most successful collaborations were with director Wong Kar-Wai, with whom he made *Happy Together*, *Days of Being Wild* and *Ashes of Time*.



WORLDWIDE



Benny Carter died at 95.

Jazz Great Benny Carter Dies
Legendary jazz pioneer and big band leader Benny Carter, who helped break Hollywood's bar on black composers, died on Saturday at Cedars Sinai hospital in Los Angeles, friends said on Sunday. He was 95.
Carter, who was one of the first black composers and arrangers to work on mainstream Hollywood films, including such classics as "Stormy Weather," had been hospitalized for about two weeks, complaining of bronchitis and fatigue, said family friend Virginia Wicks.
In a career that spanned seven decades, Carter played with such jazz luminaries as pianist Willie "The Lion" Smith, Fats Waller, Miles Davis and Dizzie Gillespie. He is also credited with launching Ella Fitzgerald's career by introducing her to bandleader Chick Webb.

A largely self-taught musician, Carter established the swing-era, big band sound through ensemble compositions for the Fletcher Henderson orchestra and later his own band.

Courtney Cuts the Drama
In an exclusive interview with Billboard, singer songwriter Courtney Love talks about her return to music after a five-year absence.
Out October 28, Love's "America's Sweetheart" will be the first release under a new three-album deal with Virgin Records and her first as a solo artist since Hole disbanded.
Love has spent much of the past five years in court, battling her former record company, Universal Music Group, and her late husband Kurt Cobain's Nirvana band mates.
She's also taken on the mantle of artist advocate, testifying against the music-industry exemption in California's so-called seven-year statute.
But now she says she is firmly focused on creating music. In the interview, Love candidly addresses her past label woes, how she chose Virgin Records, whether she'd write for

Britney Spears and her connection to America's original sweetheart, Mary Pickford.
(Reuters / Billboard)



Eminem

Eminem to Play Two Shows in Hometown
Eminem fans are celebrating the return of their hometown hero.
The rapper, born Marshall Mathers III, was to play two shows, joined by 50 Cent and Missy Elliott, at Detroit's Ford Field Saturday and Sunday. The shows are billed as his only North American concert dates this year.
Eminem's representatives met Thursday with Mayor Kwame Kilpatrick's staff to discuss planning and security, and the rapper filmed a video to accompany his onstage introduction, the Detroit Free Press reported.
(AP)



Hugh Hefner is gearing up to celebrate the 50th anniversary.

Hefner Prepares for Playboy's 50th Anniversary
Hugh Hefner is gearing up to celebrate the 50th anniversary of his magazine Playboy.
The 77-year-old says he has no plans to retire any time soon.
"I'm the luckiest guy on the planet. What I'm doing keeps me young," he said. "I'll be doing it as long as I can. My mother lived to be 101 and was very vital when she passed away."
Hefner borrowed US \$600 to launch Playboy in 1953 with Marilyn Monroe as the first pinup.
Fifty years later, the magazine has become an international success. A&E will broadcast a special marking the anniversary this fall. (AP)

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Cycles of History

Lance Armstrong Chases Immortality in 2003 Tour de France



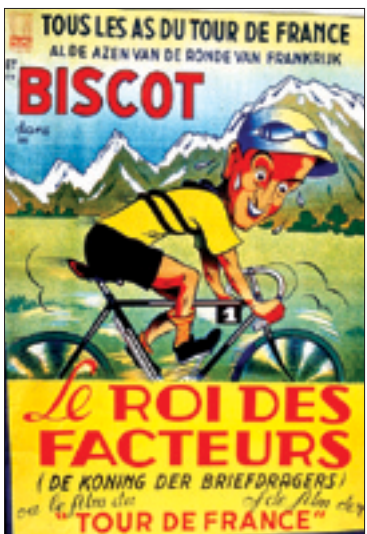
Australian Bradley McGee donned the first yellow jersey in this year's Tour de France, which started on July 5.

Photocome



Three posters from Tours of the past

Photocome



By Hou Mingxin

On July 5, 198 riders from all over the world started out from Paris in the 100th Tour de France.

This year's 21-stage, 2,084-mile course is loosely based on the inaugural route of 1903, including six of the original host cities and many famous climbs from the pages of the Tour's history books.

For defending champion Lance Armstrong, a cancer survivor, victory in the centenary running of the world's most famous cycling race would be his fifth in a row and make him arguably the greatest rider in the tour's history.

The Origins of the Tour

The legendary Tour de France began in 1903 as a result of a feud between two French sports newspapers.

The papers in question were *Le Vélo* and *L'Auto-velo*, which was founded by a former advertiser who was unhappy with some of *Le Vélo*'s editorial policies.

In January of 1903, *Le Vélo* won a trademark suit against its competitor and *L'Auto-velo* was forced to reduce its name to simply *L'Auto*.

Afraid that the change of moniker would kill the paper, *L'Auto* editor Henri Desgrange decided to stage a major race to generate publicity and raise circulation. His cycling reporter, Georges Lefevre, suggested a six-day race over normal roads and through towns rather than on a track.

On January 19, 1903, *L'Auto* announced the creation of the greatest cycling trial in the world, a race that would last over one month and take riders from Paris to Lyon, Marseille, Toulouse, Bordeaux, Nantes and back to Paris. However, due in part to the 20-franc entrance fee, response was poor. Only 15 riders had signed up by a week before the scheduled May 31 start.

Desgrange had little choice but to postpone the race. He changed the starting date to July 1 and also announced the first 50 riders would be given 5 francs a day to cover their expenses and the prize purse would be raised to 20,000 francs.

Despite another postponement to July 19 for logistical reasons, a total of 60 cyclists ended up riding in the race, which was an enormous

success. A crowd of around 20,000 people paid to greet winner Maurice Garin as he entered Paris, and 130,000 copies of a special issue of *L'Auto* covering the race were sold,

Top Tour Winners

5 times, Jacques Anquetil (1957, 61-64 France)

5 times, Bernard Hinault (1977-79, 81-82, 85 France)

5 times, Miguel Indurain (1991-95 Spain)

5 times, Eddy Merckx (1969-72, 74, Belgium)

4 times, Lance Armstrong (1999-02, USA)

100,000 more copies than the paper's total circulation six months earlier.

Since that first race, the basic idea of a tour through the country, broken into stages and based on cumulative time, has remained intact, while the route itself has changed repeatedly.

In 1910, believing the only way to maintain public interest in the race would be to change its course from year to year, Desgrange added a stage in the Pyrenees Mountains and then shifted the race route to cross through the Alps the following year.

Partway through the 1919 race, it occurred to Desgrange that the race leader ought to wear something distinctive, since spectators along the route often had no idea who was winning. He decided on a yellow jersey, mainly because *L'Auto* was printed on yellow paper, and hence the famous *maillot jaune* was born.

The original race had six stages and covered 2,388 kilometers, eventually expanding to a greatest length of 24 stages and 5,564 kilometers. In recent years, the total distance has ranged from around 3,500 to 4,000 kilometers.

Legends of the Tour

The race's first five-time winner, Frenchman Jacques Anquetil, whose triumphs came between 1957 and 1964, set a pattern that would be followed by the other great Tour riders. Unbeatable in the time trials, he was content with just staying with the best climbers in the mountains.

Belgian Eddy Merckx is undeniably the best rider in the history of cycling. He claimed his five Tours between 1969 and 1974 and holds most of the race

records, winning 34 stages and wearing the yellow jersey for a total of 96 days.

France's Bernard Hinault, a farmer from Brittany in Northwest France, willed his way to domination of the cycling world in the 1980s then made way for the rise of American Greg LeMond in 1986.

Spaniard Miguel Indurain earned a reputation as a model of consistency and one of the greatest time trial specialists ever. Those traits led him to five consecutive Tour wins from 1991 to 1995, the unequaled, greatest achievement in the race's history.

Tales of Tragedy

Despite its glories, calamity has been no stranger to the Tour and many riders and winners have met tragic ends.

The first four winners to die did so in the battlefields of World War One.

Three riders died in the race itself. Francesco Cepeda crashed in the Galibier Pass in 1935, Briton Tom Simpson died as a result of exhaustion and amphetamines during a climb in 1967 and Armstrong's teammate Fabio Casartelli crashed in the Pyrenees in 1995.

A few others have suffered violent deaths away from the race. Italian Ottavio Bottecchia, the 1924 winner, was stoned to death in a vineyard in 1927 in a case that was never fully solved. Rene Pottier, the winner, hung himself the following year after his wife left him.

Frenchman Henri Pelissier, the most popular rider of the 1920s, was killed by his mistress in 1935. Spaniard Luis Ocana, the 1973 winner, committed suicide after his farm went bankrupt.

Many other famous riders died of illness, while some saw their careers ruined by the forces of history. Belgian Philippe Thys won three Tours, the first two before World War One, the third in 1920 and could have fared much better had the race not been suspended because of the war.

For many historians, Italian Gino Bartali, winner in 1938 and 1948, was arguably the most talented rider of all time, but World War Two stopped him from pursuing more Tour victories.

Armstrong Faces History

Already certain of a place among the major names of the Tour de France, American Lance Armstrong is out for greater



Lance Armstrong

Xinhua Photo

glory this year.

The Texan hopes to tie Indurain's record of five consecutive victories, while also securing the sixth Tour win of his career, which would be an unprecedented achievement for the 31-year-old US Postal rider.

While the punishing three-week race is never easy, Armstrong won last year's Tour with a comfortable lead of more than seven minutes, and has since even suggested he would not mind a little more competition.

"The Tour de France could be a lot closer," he told the Associated Press last month during the Dauphine Libere race, which he later won. "That's more exciting, which is fine by me."

With his enduring strength, single-minded focus on the Tour and lack of obvious challengers, however, Armstrong remains the favorite to win again this year.

Yet there are a few factors that could stand in his way.

One is age. While racers have won the Tour well into their 30s, all of the five-time winners made their final successful race before their 32nd birthdays, and two of them before they were 30.

Armstrong, who overcame testicular cancer to win his first Tour in 1999, is no stranger to adversity. While acknowledging that he is getting older, Armstrong insists he's still in top form.

However his season so far has been less than satisfactory. He finished 20th at the Liege-Bastogne-Liege classic in Belgium at the end of April, and then didn't race until the Dauphine Libere, which ended June 15.

This year's contest also marks the return of German cyclist Jan Ullrich, who won the Tour in 1997. He is back after nearly two years marred by injuries and a drug ban.

It is not clear whether Ullrich

will be at the height of his powers after the long absence, but Armstrong sees him as a serious challenge.

"Ullrich looks in better shape than he's ever been. He's still one of the biggest engines in cycling, and he has that key factor because he knows he can win it," Armstrong said in an interview with the Associated Press on July 1.

Armstrong has also listed Spanish cyclist Iban Mayo, the runner-up at Dauphine Libere, and up-and-coming racer Tyler Hamilton, a former US Postal teammate who rides for the Danish team CSC, as potential rivals for the yellow jersey.

The 32-year-old Hamilton won the Liege-Bastogne-Liege on April 27 and Switzerland's Tour of Romandie in early May.

Another threat comes from Italian climbing specialist Gilberto Simoni, who has spoken of his plans to challenge the American in the mountains.

Simoni was excluded from the Tour last year after testing positive for cocaine metabolites. He was later cleared by the Italian cycling federation and won this year's Giro d'Italia.

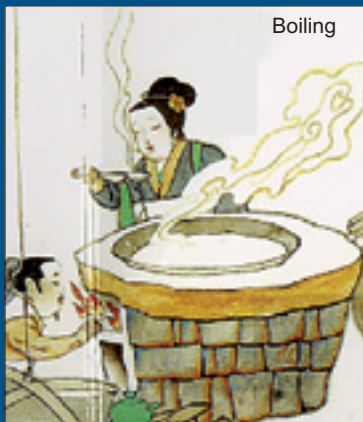
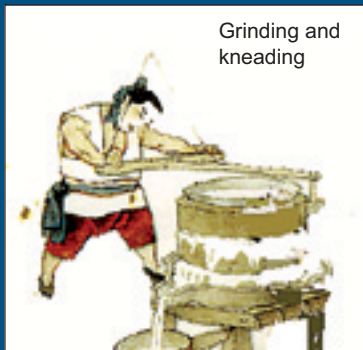
This year's route is nearly optimal for Armstrong. It includes one more mountain stage, where the 31-year-old is overwhelming, than last year's race. Armstrong won the yellow jersey in all five of the mountain rides in the 2002 Tour, leaving his rivals eating his dust and gasping for breath.

His opponents see little evidence that he will race any differently than he has in the last four Tours, meaning they have a monumental task ahead of them.

"I'm sure he's going to be very strong. It's not easy to get the victory from him," said Bjarne Riis, winner of the 1996 Tour and now Hamilton's manager, told the Associated Press on July 1. "But you never know what can happen, he can be sick, he can crash, have a bad day like anybody else."

Three weeks, Europe's steepest mountains, determined rivals and more than 2,000 miles of asphalt stand between Armstrong and history. A history that came a large step closer after he donned the yellow jersey for the first time this year on Sunday during the eighth stage on his way to an overall lead as of Wednesday.

The process of making tofu



The Wonders of Tofu

By James Liu

Tofu is to the East as the potato is to the West. A basic, lightly flavored starch, it too can be baked, boiled, broiled, grilled or fried. It can be eaten whole, smashed or mixed with a myriad of other ingredients to form a wide range of dishes. Tofu even shows up potatoes in some respects, as contains complete, digestible protein while potatoes do not, and it is far tastier raw.

Also known as soybean curd, tofu is a soft, cheese-like food made by curdling fresh hot soymilk with a coagulant. Traditionally, the curdling agent is bittern, a seawater coagulant, or calcium sulfate, a naturally occurring mineral, but curds can be produced by acidic foods like lemon juice or vinegar. The curds then are pressed into a solid block.

Tofu was first used in China around 200 B.C. Although the discovery of the process for making tofu is lost to the ages, Chinese legend has it that the first batch of tofu was created by Liu An, also known as Prince Huainan, grandson of the establisher of the Western Han Dynasty, Liu Bang. He is said to have accidentally invented tofu in the pursuit of longevity.

Since then, the Huainan region between Huaihe and Yangtze rivers in central Anhui Province has been regarded as the hometown of tofu, and more recently tofu festivals have been held there every year in mid-September.

Regular tofu comes in water packed tubs in the refrigerated section of the grocery store. Tofu can also be frozen, a process that makes it more chewy and sponge-like and can be very useful in certain dishes. Tofu is often used as a meat substitute in vegetarian cooking, in part because it is high in protein, and it is an extremely versatile ingredient.

In recipes, tofu acts like a sponge and has the miraculous ability to soak up any flavor that is added to it, especially when marinated. Crumble it into a pot of spicy chili sauce and it tastes like chili. Blend it with cocoa and sweetener and it becomes a double for chocolate cream pie filling. Cubes of firm tofu can be added to any casserole or soup to add body and nutrition.

Types of Tofu

Tofu can be divided two types, differing by their production process: fresh tofu and fermented tofu. The latter, such as the strong-smelling *chou*, or stinky tofu, and red fermented *furu*, are made from fresh tofu fermented for 20 days in a closed jar.

Fresh tofu also comes in two kinds, that made with bittern and that made with calcium sulfate. Tofu made with calcium sulfate, called *nan* tofu in Chinese, contains more water and tastes softer than that made with bittern. It is a

good choice for recipes that call for blended tofu and in cooking soup.

Tofu made with bittern, called *bei* tofu, is dense and solid and holds up well in stir-fries or on the grill. Bei tofu also is higher in protein, fat and calcium.

Buying and Storing Tofu

Tofu most commonly is sold in water-filled tubs, vacuum packs, or in aseptic brick packages, normally in the dairy or produce sections of supermarkets. Unless it is aseptically packaged, tofu should be kept cold.

Once the tofu package is open, leftover tofu should be rinsed and covered with fresh water for storage. Change the water daily to keep it fresh and use the tofu within a week.

Tofu can be frozen up to five months. Defrosted tofu has a pleasant caramel color and a chewy, spongy texture that soaks up marinade sauces and is great for the grill.

Tips For Using Tofu

Tofu is a good source of protein for elderly people who prefer dishes that are easy to chew and digest.

Add chunks of firm tofu to soups and stews.

Mash tofu with cottage cheese and seasoning to make a sandwich spread.

Marinate tofu in barbecue sauce, char it on the grill and serve on crusty Italian bread.

Add a package of taco seasoning to pan-fried, crumbled tofu and serve as a replacement for beef in traditional tacos.

Blend tofu with melted chocolate chips and a little sweetener to make a chocolate cream pie.

Make egg-less egg salad with tofu chunks, diced celery, mayonnaise and a dab of prepared mustard.

Major Tofu Brands in the Market

In the Beijing market, the following brands are regarded as quality products and have passed the tests of Beijing Industry and Commerce Administrative Bureau: Baiyu brand (白玉牌), Tianshuiyuan brand (甜水园牌), Doudouchu brand (豆腐厨牌), Huayu brand (化玉牌), Tianxiang brand (天香牌), Xiangxiang brand (香香牌), and Bosuzhai brand (博素斋牌).

Huainan Tofu**Banquet Restaurant**

While tofu is readily available throughout the city, few people really know how to make the most of it. To taste all that can be done with this miracle ingredient, look no further than this restaurant, the only one in the city to specialize in tofu and which offers nearly 100 bean curd-based dishes.

Soon after this second-floor establishment opened in 1996, it was considered in league with the Quanjudo roast duck and Donglaishun lamb hot pot restaurants as a must-go eatery by tofu-loving Japan and



Sliced tofu soup with safflower, 18 yuan (right)



Southeastern Asian tourists. Prices are generally low, as tofu costs less than meat and poultry, but guests can ask head chef Wang Ziqin to concoct banquets that go for up to 5,000 yuan. That expense is justified in the demonstrations of amazing cooking skill offered in most of the dishes, such as the slicing of tofu as thin as hair in the dish *honghua yinsigeng* (sliced tofu soup with safflower, 18 yuan).

Yipin tofu (steamed ground fishmeat mixed with tofu, 28 yuan) is served like a cake with a topping of dates and has a nice fragrance with a pleasing fish taste. Soy even shows up in the free beverage served to all diners, not tea but ice soybean milk with a topping of diced watermelon. Chinese menu only.

Add: 109 Wanquanhe Lu, Haidian **Open:** 10 am – 10 pm **Tel:** 6262 0652 **Average cost:** 35 yuan per person

Tofu shows its true colors as a meat substitute on the grill. Though some may find it less satisfactory than a nice steak, the tofu in the recipe at right completely absorbs the flavor of its delicious teriyaki marinade, has a firm texture and even picks up a smoky aspect and pleasing dark stripes from the grill.

Photos by Wang Yong

Tangerine Teriyaki Tofu

By Joel Kirkhart

1 kilo firm tofu in solid block
3 strips tangerine zest (the colored rind)
1/2 cup soy sauce
1/2 cup sugar
1/2 cup tangerine juice
1/4 cup sesame oil
2 cloves garlic, peeled and smashed
2 slices peeled fresh ginger, smashed with side of knife
2 whole star anise
1/2 teaspoon cornstarch dissolved in 2 teaspoons water
1 tablespoon toasted sesame seeds for garnish

2 scallions, finely chopped for garnish
1. Press the tofu by placing it on a cutting board propped at a slight angle set to drain. Place a heavy skillet or wood chopping board over and press for one hour. Then cut the tofu block into one centimeter thick slices. Arrange in large flat non-reactive dish.

2. Combine the soy sauce, sugar, juice, oil, garlic, ginger and star anise in a mixing bowl and whisk together. Pour over tofu and let it marinade for one to two hours.
3. Set up and light the grill until coals are hot. Strain the marinade and boil over high heat, then simmer uncovered until syrupy, around five minutes. Add cornstarch and water mixture and boil until thickened, around 30 seconds.
4. When ready to cook, brush the grill grate with oil and place tofu on. Grill until sizzling and well browned, around four to six minutes per side. Baste the tofu twice per side with the thick sauce while grilling.
5. Remove tofu and put on plate. Sprinkle sesame seeds and scallions over tofu and serve.
Makes 10 pieces, serving three people as main course.



Come for the Scene, Stay for the Food

By Joel Kirkhart

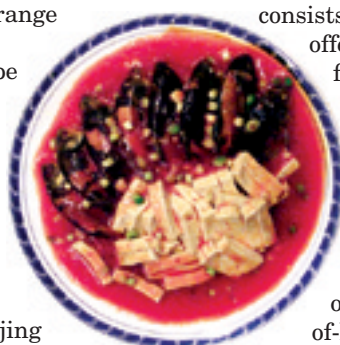
Baguo Buyi is one of those remarkable Chinese chain restaurants like Jiutouniao (Nine Headed Bird) that despite their extensive range and large management ranks, manages to escape mediocrity and offer quality food at reasonable prices. This Chengdu-based restaurant company serves authentic Sichuan cuisine at over 20 branches around the country, with two in Beijing and another on the way.

Both local outlets offer the same solid food, but in terms of vibe and décor, the branch on Ping'an Avenue near Di'anmen is the one to try. A strip of tables facing the street are run-of-the-mill, though quite clean with attentive service, while the main show is in the central area. Walking through the door is like

entering a teahouse or inn set of a Chinese kung fu movie. The space is covered in wood and dominated by a large, ornate staircase. The main area consists only of private rooms that offer privacy and comfortable, fancy furnishings.

Another reason to book one of the rooms is the chance to watch the nightly *bianlian* or face-changing show, run at eight o'clock. The ten-minute performance focuses on the Sichanese art of slight-of-hand fast mask changing, with a little fire-breathing excitement thrown in, sure to thrill kids, visitors, anyone really.

Overall the food is very good, nicely cooked and wonderfully presented in decent portions. Premium dishes come at high prices, such as ginseng and onion at 488 yuan, but the extensive menu has plenty of low-priced items



Braised bean curd with crucian carp in chili sauce, 28 yuan



Sauteed crab with corn in special sauce

Photos by Lou Ge

that make a good meal quite reasonable.

A good starter is the house special *buyiji* (buyi chicken, 28 yuan), tender slices of chicken on the bone poached in a light pickling sauce, and a satisfying and spicy *chuanbei liangfen* (Sichuan-style chewy noodles, 10 yuan).

Among the main dishes, another speciality is *doufu jiyu* (braised bean curd with crucian carp in chili sauce, 28 yuan) four well-cooked small fish presented in a pool of piquant red sauce along with fresh tofu. Better is the

hexiangfenzhengrou (rice-wrapped pork steamed in leaves, 18 yuan), a wonderful take on popular *mifenrou*. Here, the fatty meat is cooked till it melts in the mouth, the rice coating has a winning mild spicy-sweet flavor, and underneath are soft chunks of sweet potato.

The *yansun chao larou* (smoked meat with smoked bamboo shoot, 22 yuan) was fine but nothing spectacular, as opposed to the surprising *houmo ba lusun* (monkey head mushrooms with asparagus, 48 yuan), a beautiful plate of tender asparagus spears in a salty light sauce, in the middle of which is a dome of meaty mushrooms that taste like chicken, maybe even better.

Diners that don't fill up on dishes can dig into the list of noodles and other starches, none of which cost more than 3 yuan or are particularly remarkable. While the food at Baguobuyi is good, the reason to come is the feel and the show, which make it a top pick to please a large family or impress an out-of-town guest. Menu in Chinese only

Add: 89-3 Di'anmen Dongdajie, Dongcheng **Tel:** 6400 8888 **Open:** 10 am – 2 pm, 5-9 pm **Average cost:** 50 yuan per person

Performance



Yang Kun and Chen Lin Outdoor Concert

Famous singers Chen Kun and Chen Lin will perform, as will some other acts, including Hua'er band and China Hotgirls. Beer available.

Where: Ritan Park **When:** July 19, 6 pm **Admission:** 68 – 98 yuan **Tel:** 6551 8888

War Brother

A story told through mime, rather than words. It's about a soldier who is the only survivor of a battle who returns home to find his sister does not value a peaceful life. He decides to start a new life with her.

Where: People's Art Theater, 22 Wangfujing Dajie **When:** till July 20, 7:15 pm **Admission:** 80 yuan **Tel:** 6525 0123

Ode to Joy

Performed by Yin Xiumei, Wang Haitao, Li Weiwei, Wang Xia and Yao Hong along with China Opera House. The program includes works by Beethoven, Russian folk songs such as *Kalinka*, and famous arias such as *Chanson du Toreador* from *Carmen*.

Where: Tianqiao Theatre, 30 Beiwailu, Xuanwu **When:** July 20-21, 7:30 pm **Admission:** 50-380 yuan **Tel:** 8315 6357

Exhibitions

Asian Fields

Since January, British artist Antony Gormley has been in Guangzhou preparing for the Asian installment of his highly acclaimed Field series. For Asian Field, Gormley has gathered a group of almost 400 Guangzhou

Blush (Hong Fen)

Directed by Li Shaohong, starring Wang Ji, Wang Zhiwen and He Saifei. After Liberation, the prostitutes at Red Happiness Lane are sent for re-education. But Qiu Yi escapes, and goes to the home of one of her lovers, Lao Pu. There she spends the nights with Lao Pu and the days in bed, hiding from officials and the condemning eye of Lao Pu's mother. After a while, she no longer feels welcome in Lao Pu's bed. In Chinese with

English subtitles.

Where: Cherry Lane outdoor movies, Fountain Terrace, Hilton Hotel, 1 Dongfang Lu, Dongsanhuan Beilu **When:** July 11-12, 8:30 pm **Admission:** 50 yuan, includes a beer/non-alcoholic drink **Tel:** 6430 1398

All That Jazz

Directed by Bob Fosse, starring Roy Scheider, Jessica Lange. It is actually a semi-autobiographical account of the

Movies

multi-talented performer was an Oscar, Tony and Emmy Award winner. In English with Chinese subtitles

Where: Space for Imagination, 5 Xiwangzhuang Haidian **When:** July 24, 7 pm **Admission:** free **Tel:** 6279 1280

Canone Inverso (Making Love)

Directed by Ricky Tognazzi, starring Gabriel Byrne, Domiziana Giordano and

Gregory Harrison. Based on the novel by Paolo Maurensig, this multi-layered, multi-generational tale centers around a half-Jewish boy, who grows up amid anti-Semitism in pre-WWII Europe. Eventually, a rare violin and a canone inverso, a traditional musical piece written for two parts, reveals secrets about his lineage. In Italian with English subtitles.

Where: Cultural Office of Italian Embassy **When:** July 24, 7 pm **Admission:** free **Tel:** 6532 2187

The Matrix: Reloaded

Directed by Larry Wachowski and Andy Wachowski, starring Keanu Reeves, Laurence Fishburne, Carrie-Anne Moss, Hugo Weaving and Monica Bellucci. In the second chapter of the Matrix trilogy, freedom fighters Neo, Trinity and Morpheus continue to lead the revolt against the machines, unleashing their arsenal of extraordinary skills and weaponry against the systematic forces of repression and exploitation. In their quest to save the human race from extinction, they gain greater insight into the construction of The Matrix and Neo's pivotal role in the fate of mankind. In English (Call for program times).

Where: Huaxing Guoji Yingcheng (UME International Cineplex), 44 Shuangyushu Kexueyuan, Haidian **When:** till July 31 **Admission:** 70, 80 yuan **Tel:** 6261 2851



residents and 100 tons of clay to create 200,000 fist-sized terra cotta figurines. It is the award-winning artist's largest undertaking yet.

Where: National Museum of Chinese History **When:** July 27 – August 28, 9 am – 4 pm **Tel:** 6526 3355 ext. 2011

Clay Figurine Exhibition

The exhibition features the nine sets of painted clay figurines by Nirenzhang, a famous folk clay sculptor, developed in the Qing Dynasty. These clay figurines were given to Empress Dowager Cixi as a birthday present.

Where: the Summer Palace **When:** 6:30 am – 6 pm **Admission:** 20 yuan **Tel:** 6288 1144

Pottery Exhibition

Over 350 pottery works are displayed in this exhibition. They come from China's five most famous ancient kilns: Ruyao,

Dingyao, Guanyao, Geyao and Junyao.

Where: Wangfujing Arts and Crafts Museum, 200 Wangfujing Dajie **When:** till July 20, 10 am – 7 pm **Admission:** free **Tel:** 6528 9326

Jams

Lucky Band

Tonight AK-47, Galaxy Equation (Fangchengshi), Insect in the Autumn (Qiutiande Chongzi), Oxygen Pot (Yeyang Guantou) will be on stage. Tomorrow, Twist Machine band will perform tracks from their debut album.

Where: Get Lucky, 500 meters east of the south gate of the University of International Business and Economics, Chaoyang **When:** July 18-19, 9:30 pm **Admission:** 30 yuan

Tel: 6429 9109

Rock Night

A night of rock and roll music, with covers of tracks by bands like the Stone Roses and the Strokes.

Where: Huxley's 2, Gongti Nanlu (next to Fun Dazzle) **When:** July 18, 9 pm **Admission:** 15 yuan **Tel:** 6500 1251

Mr. Zhou Performs

Another big band takes to the stage, dark rockers Mr. Zhou.

Where: Loup Chante, east gate of Peking University, Haidian **When:** July 19, 9 pm **Admission:** 30 yuan **Tel:** 6276 7355

Sports

Two Valleys

This hike runs through a lush valley north of the Ming tombs, near the Great Wall. The hike

winds its way around the wall and beside a stream.

Where: Changping, north of Beijing **When:** July 20, meet 8 am outside Starbucks by the Lido, return 5 pm How much: adults 150 yuan, children 100 yuan **Tel:** 13701003694 Email: bjhikers@yahoo.co.uk

Golf Day

Bring your friends and guests to join this fun-filled monthly Golf event at the Grand Canal Golf Course. You may register as a single, or in a pair, but will be teamed up on the day with other golfers. All Wednesday golfers are also invited back to the Capital Club for a complimentary refreshing drink after playing (limited to the first 20 players).

Where: 50th floor, Capital Mansion, 6 Xinyuannan Lu, Chaoyang **When:** July 23, 12:30 pm **Admission:** 400 yuan, includes green fee, caddie, locker and prizes **Tel:** 8486 2225 ext. 261

Activities

Eunuch Temple and Tomb

A local attraction in Shijingshan is Fa Hai Temple, nestled in the hills and built by eunuchs. This Ming Dynasty Buddhist temple boasts some of the largest murals in China. The temple also has impressive, monumental tombs, such as the one built with royal grandeur for the eunuch Tian, a favorite of several generations of Qing emperors. Tour with English translation provided.

Where: Meet at Lee's An-

tique Carpets, Liangmaqiao Lu, near the 21st Century Hotel **When:** July 20, 1-5 pm **Admission:** adults 70 yuan, students 60 yuan; includes transportation and guide **Tel:** 8462 2081

Trip to Great Wall

Wang Jianwu, a photographer, will give a demonstration on taking beautiful photos of the Great Wall. At night, further activities will be held at the foot of the Great Wall, involving music and beer. No English translation provided.

Where: Xingshecongong Book bar, north of National Library, Zhongguancun Nandajie **When:** July 19-20 **Tel:** 6846 3550

Summer Nights

A number of activities will be held in Zhongshan Park. Visitors can see an orchid exhibition, enjoy Beijing opera and other music, and watch famous films from around the world.

Where: Zhongshan Park **When:** July 19, 7-9 pm **Admission:** 5 yuan **Tel:** 6605 5431

Services

YPHH Online Art Auction

YPHH offers you a unique chance to purchase art by Beijing-residing Dutch artist Randolph Bruin! Randolph has selected four paintings (all oil on canvas) of his Beijing-series for auction. Please have a look at his paintings on the YPHH website: www.yphh.com. The auction will close on Thursday, July 31.

Parties

An Ear to the Ground

The Ear to the Ground concert series is back, bringing upcoming Chinese musicians into the limelight. The series returns for summer 2003 as a cooperation between Logistix, and the Volkswagen Sound Foundation. Bands scheduled include Insect in the Autumn, Wild Strawberries, Lucky Road, Long Kuan Jiudian, and special guest from the US Jessica. (See page 12)

Where: Yan Club, 4 Jiuxianqiao Lu
When: July, 9 pm **Admission:** 30 yuan **Tel:** 8457 3506

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By Guo Yuanfan

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Hit the Grass! It's Ski Season

By James Liu

For those counting the days until winter ushers in another ski season, the newly opened Nanshan Ski Village might offer an acceptable alternative to snow-clad slopes. While there is not even a hint of ice or snow, the grassy slopes are almost as slippery as the real thing, if not quite as soft when taking a tumble.

Nanshan Ski Village, about one and a half hours' drive from downtown, offers four grass ski routes, with a fifth under construction. Instead of snow-skis, special caterpillar rollers are employed, which are attached to the boots in the same way as skis.

The effect is somewhere between skiing and roller-skating, but somewhat slower. "There is no need to worry about falling, so long as you wear proper protective gear. It's full of fun and safe," reception manager

Wang Xiao told visitors on Sunday.

As well as hitting the slopes, visitors can test their courage, and the strength of their stomachs, on the New Zealand Zorb. This is a transparent double layer ball five meters in diameter, which holds two adults at a time. Strapped inside, you can experience the dubious thrill of being rolled down the grassy slope.

There is also a cable hang glider, which elicits almost as many screams from riders as the New Zealand Zorb. Passengers first take a cable car up to the glider station, where they are strapped onto the glider to "fly" 500 meters.

For those who prefer to remain more or less in contact with the ground, there are all-terrain-vehicles available in which one can navigate a four-kilometer route around a hill. The four-wheel, gas-powered vehicles are easy enough to drive, but the rough

journey is a true test of skill.

Finally, for those who want to break the land-speed record, there is a 1,300-meter toboggan run, featuring one tunnel, nine bridges and dozens of sharp bends. The record currently stands at 99 seconds.

The village also offers special activities tailored for kids, such as "rock" climbing, on inflatable rocks and a "sky diver" ride.

Getting there:

Take the Dongmi Zhuanxian bus (air conditioned) from Dongzhimen station to Xidaqiao station, Miyun (10 yuan). Then hire a taxi to Nanshan (10 yuan). Alternatively, drive out the Airport Expressway, turn right from Kuliushu Huandao, then turn left from Caihong bridge onto Shunmi Lu. The village is another 25 minutes drive from there.

Tel: 8428 6688 **Open:** 9 am – 6 pm till October 31
(Photos by Lou Ge)

Dem Bones Rise Again

By Zhang Bo

The Peking Man Site at Zhoukoudian was among the first cultural relics sites in China to be included on the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)'s World Heritage List. The coming exhibition of a fragment of a Peking Man skullcap and recent new finds at the site have again caught the attention of both scholars and tourists.

Fossil discovery at Tianyuan Cave

Since the 1920s, 26 separate sites at Zhoukoudian have been excavated, providing materials of immeasurable value in the study of the evolution of the human race.

In 2001, a cave containing ancient fossils was discovered five kilometers southwest of the museum. During the recent excavation (see report in *Beijing Today*, July 11, Page 1), as well as numerous animal fossils, some primitive human fossils were discovered, including a jawbone, thighbone, collarbone and vertebra.

"Most of the fossils are fragmented and it seems that they all belong to an adult primitive

male living around 25 thousand years ago," said Professor Wu Xinzhi, academician of the Chinese Academy of Sciences' Institute of Vertebrate Paleontology and Anthropology at a press conference last Monday.

Peking Man fragment in first public appearance

Thirty-seven years after its discovery, one of the only two known fragments of fossilized Peking Man skullcap will go on display, for the first time ever, at the Zhoukoudian Site Museum later this year.

Covering an area of 1,000 square meters, the Zhoukoudian Site Museum is located at the foot of Longgu (Dragon Bone) Mountain, in Fangshan District. Established in 1953, the museum shows the living environment and conditions of Peking Man (600,000 years ago), Xindong Man (100,000 years ago) and Upper Cave Man (18,000 years ago).

The two bones fragments were unearthed in 1966 by Paleanthropologist Pei Wenzhong. "These are the only two known existing fragments of a fossilized Peking Man skullcap," museum staff member Wei Jianhua told *Beijing Today*. "When



The Peking Man skullcap

they were found, two small fragments were combined to form a bigger one, the occipital bone. The other fragment on exhibition is a fossilized frontal bone."

The famous Peking Man fossil skullcaps, discovered in 1929 and 1936, disappeared during World War II and their whereabouts remain unknown.

It is coincidental that the two fragments discovered in 1966, together with the replicas of fragments found in 1934 and 1936, can be integrated into an almost intact skullcap. With a brain volume of 1,140 cubic milliliters, this skullcap belonged to a middle aged male, possessing the typical characteristics of Peking Man, but apparently somewhat more advanced.

Until now, the fragments have been kept in the special

depository of cultural treasures at the Institute of Vertebrate Paleontology and Paleoanthropology.

Last August, the municipal government and the institute jointly launched an activity to improve the environment and infrastructures of Zhoukoudian, and the vicinities of the museum have taken on a new look. Yunju Temple, a Buddhist temple to the west of the museum, features stone inscriptions preserved from the Sui and Tang dynasties (581-907). To the southeast of the museum, lies the Western Zhou Dynasty Yan State Site, offering an insight into the culture of the Yan State, which flourished nearly 3,000 years ago.

Getting there: Bus 917 leaves Tianqiao for Zhoukoudian at 7:10 am returns at 2:35 pm on holidays and weekends. Otherwise, from Liuli Qiao on the Southwest Third Ring Road, drive along the Beijing-Shijiazhuang Expressway for half an hour and turn west at the Fangshan turn-off, then follow the signs to Zhoukoudian.

Open: 8:30 am – 4:30 pm
Admission: 20 yuan
Tel: 6930 1287

The Scent of Summer

By Guo Yuandan

The lotus holds a special place in the hearts of the Chinese. Long cherished as a symbol of purity, lotus blossoms figure prominently in Chinese poetry and painting, as well as Buddhist religious symbolism. Summer time is lotus blossom time, and parks and gardens all over Beijing are attracting visitors to appreciate the delicate and colorful blooms.

Lianhuachi Park (莲花池公园)

Situated in Fengtai District, near Beijing West Railway Station, Lianhuachi is the site of the provisional capital of the Liao Dynasty (907-1125). In 2000, the municipal government had the Lotus Pool rebuilt.

Masses of lotus flowers blossom here. Around the pool, pavilions, the long corridor and trees are in picturesque disorder.

Where: 48 Lianhuachi Lu, Fengtai **Open:** 6 am – 9 pm

Admission: 2 yuan

Yuanmingyuan (圆明园)

The Eighth Lotus Festival is currently underway at Yuanmingyuan, the Old Summer Palace. The flowers can be enjoyed from the banks of the lake, or from a boat. Visitors can also sample lotus leaf porridge and lotus seed custard.

Where: northwest of Tsinghua University **Open:** 7 am – 7 pm

Admission: 10 yuan

Beijing Botanical Garden (北京植物园)

Thousands of lotuses create a memorable site here. The lake boasts a new fountain, with a range of 52 meters, the highest in Beijing.

Where: Wofu temple, Xiangshan, Haidian **Open:** 6 am – 9 pm **Admission:** 5 yuan

Ritan Park (日坛公园)

The lotus exhibition features some new varieties, including bowl-like lotus (碗莲), water lilies and other types of lotus.

Where: Ritan Lu, Jianwaidajie **Open:** 6 am – 10 pm **Admission:** 1 yuan

Ditan Park (地坛公园)

Four thousand lotuses are divided into different sections with such poetic titles as "Lotus in green water" and "Sweet smell of Lotus in ancient altar."

Where: Andingmenwai Dajie, Dongcheng **Open:** 6 am – 9 pm

Admission: 2 yuan

Beihai Park (北海公园)

Beihai Park is famous for its lotuses, and its central location makes it one of the most popular destinations for lotus lovers. There are 60 kinds of fine lotuses exhibited, divided into six sections.

Where: Wenjinjie, Xicheng

Open: 6 am – 10 pm **Admission:** 5 yuan

The Summer Palace (颐和园)

This year there are a great many more lotuses than in the past, including several new varieties.

Where: West of Peking University **Open:** 6:30 am – 6 pm **Admission:** 20 yuan

Zizhuyuan Park (紫竹院)

Though it is famous for bamboo, there is also a vast area of lake covered by lotuses. Walking along the paths through the bamboo is even more pleasant accompanied by the scent of the lotus flowers.

Where: Baishiqiao Lu, Haidian **Open:** 6 am – 9 pm **Admission:** 2 yuan

Photo by Huang Jianhua

